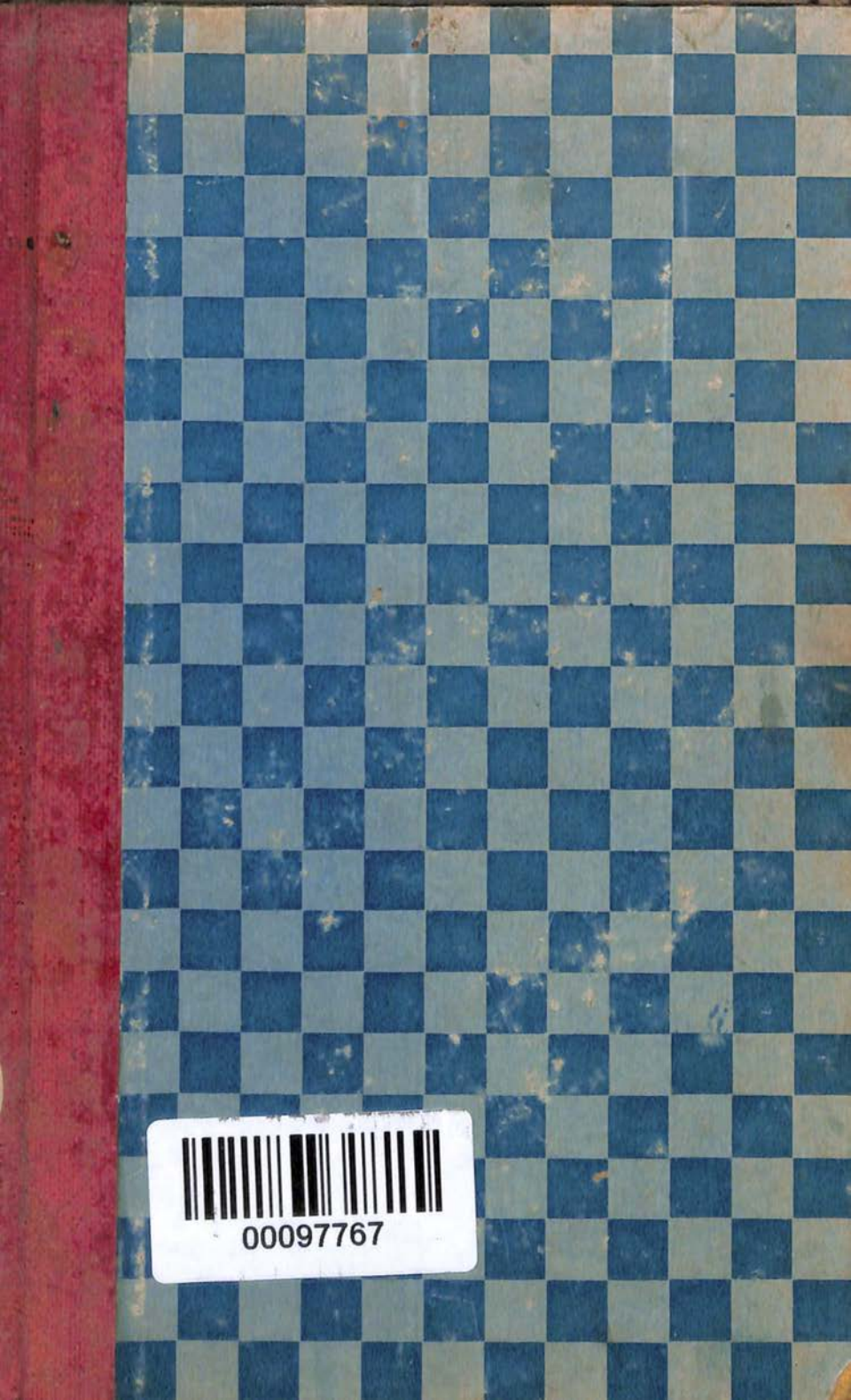
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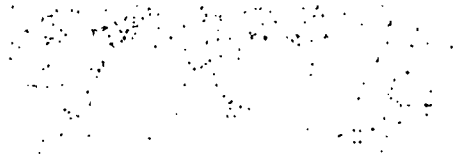

HISTORICAL & LITERARY

MEMOIRS AND ANECDOTES,

SELECTED FROM THE

CORRESPONDENCE

OF

BARON DE GRIMM

AND

DIDEROT

WITH

THE DUKE OF SAXE-GOTHA,

AND MANY OTHER DISTINGUISHED PERSONS,

BETWEEN THE YEARS 1753 AND 1790.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS.

	Page
Reception of M. de Marmontel at the French Academy....	1
Letter from Barnevelt in Prison to Trueman his Friend, by M. Dorat	3
On the Works of the Marquis de Caraccioli	5
On the Recal of the Protestants into France by M. Morandière.....	5
Essay on Luxury, by M. de Saint Lambert.....	7
Translation of Robertson's History of Scotland, by M. de La Chapelle.....	16
Reflections upon Barnevelt's Letter to Trueman, by M. Diderot	18
Description of Iceland from the German of M. Horrebows	26
On the Works of Corneille with M. de Voltaire's Commentary	28
Tales by William Vadé, published by M. de Voltaire.....	41
Decree of the Council of State reversing the Sentence of the Parliament of Toulouse against the unfortunate Calas..	41
First representation of Cromwell, a Tragedy.....	43
On the Natural History of Messrs. de Buffon and Daubenton	47
Death of Count Algarotti	58
On Pope Benedict XIV. and the Competition between Tasso and Ariosto	59
The Poem of Ricciardetto by Signor Fortegnerri	62
The Abbé and the Rabbi, by the Baron d'Holbach	67
The Circle, or an Evening à-la-mode, by M. Poinsinet....	71
Application of General Paoli to J. J. Rousseau to frame a code of Laws for Corsica	74

Page

Letters from the Mountains, by J. J. Rousseau..... 75
Memoirs of the Count de Comminges..... 76
Death of the Poet Roy..... 77
Death of the Marquis de Montmirail..... 78
Translation of the Theory of Moral Sentiments, by Adam Smith..... 79
On J. J. Rousseau's Letters from the Mountains..... 80
The Abbé de Boufflers becomes the Chevalier de Boufflers, and his Letter to the Abbé Porquet on the change.... 89
Quarrel between Mademoiselle Clairon and M. de Saint Foix..... 100
On the Theory of Governments.....?..... 103
Anecdote of an English Officer and an Inhabitant of Tetuan 108
On the ancient and present Government of France, by the Marquis d'Argenson..... 111
Definitive Decree, reversing the Sentence against Calas.... 113
M. de Voltaire established at Ferney..... 114
Anecdotes respecting the Beast in the Gevaudan..... 115
Presentation of the Family of Calas to the King..... 117
Picture of the Calas Family..... 119
Purchase of Diderot's Library by the Empress of Russia.. 122
The Philosophy of History by the late Abbé Bazin, a work of M. de Voltaire's..... 124
Popular Letters on the Troubles occasioned at Geneva by Rousseau's Letters from the Mountains..... 135
Death of the Geometrician Clairaut..... 137
History of the Deliverance of the City of Toulouse..... 141
Denunciation of the Literary Gazette by the Archbishop of Paris, and Remarks upon it by the Abbé Morellet.... 142
General Reflections upon Dramatic Writing..... 143
First Appearance of the Actor Aufresne..... 147
Letter from a Soldier's Wife to her Husband..... 149
Further Account of Aufresne the Actor..... 150
Anecdotes respecting Garrick's stay at Paris..... 151
Death of Charles Vanloo, first Painter to the King..... 158
Sermon of Baron de Grimm to the Philosophers..... 160

Page
Prohibition of the Print of the Calas Family..... 164
M. de la Chapelle's Invention for supporting People in the Water 167
Death of the Count de Caylus..... 168
Reflections on Comedy and on the Writers of Comedy 173
J. J. Rousseau obliged to quit Moëtier Travers 176
Fragment of an Epic Poem by Gudin..... 177
The true Reasons for Rousseau's quitting Moëtier Travers.. 179
Plagiarisms of J. J. Rousseau 183
Journal respecting J. J. Rousseau..... 184
Recantation of Piron..... 187
Anecdote of La Fontaine..... 188
David Hume and Rousseau at Paris..... 188
Letter from the King of Prussia to Rousseau, by Mr. H. Walpole 190
M. Noël and his Musical Instrument the Pantaléon..... 192
Plates of French Head-dresses, by the Hair-dresser Le Gros..... 194
Death of Stanislaus, King of Poland and Duke of Lorraine 197
Death of the Chevalier Servandoni..... 200
On the English Play the King and the Miller, and the French Play the Hunting Party of Henry the Fourth.. 202
On Preaching, by the Abbé Coyer 205
Last Volume of Saint Foix's Historical Essays on Paris .. 208
Funeral Orations on the Death of the Dauphin..... 208
J. J. Rousseau's Letter in consequence of Mr. Walpole's .. 216
Answer of the King of Prussia to the Memorial of the Clergy of Neufchâtel against Rousseau..... 218
Abridgment of the Abbé de Fleury's Ecclesiastical History.. 219
Memorial of M. Loiseau de Manléon in favour of three Soldiers of the Guards..... 220
Remarks of M. Diderot, on M. Thomas's Eulogium of the Dauphin 223
The History of the Queen of Golconda, a Tale by the Chevalier de Boufflers..... 229

Page

Extraordinary Cure performed by Doctor Tronchin of Geneva..... 229
Horrible Catastrophe of M. de La Barre at Abbeville 231
Prizes given by the Count de Caylus for Information relative to Egypt 238
Statue of Peter the Great by Falconet..... 240
Mademoiselle Collot, celebrated for her Busts 241
Death of Mademoiselle Randon de Malboissière, and extraordinary Account of her..... 242
Death of Sir James Macdonald and extraordinary Account of him 243
Reflections upon China, with an Account of a Chinese novel translated into English 244
Anecdotes respecting the Chevalier de Lorenzi 256
Receipts for curing the Vapours 258
Quarrel between J. J. Rousseau and David Hume 259
Opinions of M. de Voltaire and others on this Quarrel 271
Madame Geoffrin's Journey to Warsaw 272
Letter of Madame Geoffrin to the Abbé de Breteuil 273
Letter from M. de Voltaire on the Quarrel between Rousseau and Mr Hume..... 275
On the Tragedy of William Tell, by M. Lemierre..... 277
Liberality of the Empress of Russia to M. Diderot 284
The Portrait of Diderot by the Painter Greuzé 285
Death of the Physician Renard and Anecdote respecting him 286
Death of the Actor Quinault Dufresne and Anecdotes respecting him and his Sisters..... 287
Political Testament of Sir Robert Walpole..... 290
On the Castle of Otranto by Horace Walpole..... 292
The Honest Criminal, a Drama, by M. de Falbaire, and a true Account of the Adventure from which it was taken 294
Benevolent Action of the Duke de Lorges 303
Reputed Benevolence of Mademoiselle Guimard..... 303
Revolution in M. de Voltaire's Household at Ferney 306
Death of M. de Gaignat, his Collection of Books and Pictures 317

Page
More Anecdotes of the Chevalier de Lorenzi..... 318
A full pardon granted to the Honest Criminal, M. Fabre .. 321
On M. de Saurin's Tragedy of Beverley..... 322
More Lorenziana 335
The Concealed Marriage, a Comedy in Three Acts, imitated from the English Comedy of the Clandestine Marriage.. 338
Travels of a Philosopher, by M. Poivre..... 339
Account of the Ship called the Voltaire 353
M. Gaignat's Manuscript of the Tales of La Fontaine.... 355
Cornelia, a Tragedy by the President Henault, printed at Strawberry Hill 357
The Huron, a Tale, by M. de Voltaire..... 361
Visit of the King of Denmark to Paris 362
Visits of Princes to Diderot the Philosopher 370
Elements of the History of England, by Millot 371
Anecdote respecting the Marriage of Molé the Actor..... 374
Account of M. de Saint Lambert, Author of the Seasons, a Poem..... 376
Journey of the Abbé Chappe d'Auteroche into Siberia.... 378
Supplement to the Instructive Bibliography of M. Debure 388
Presents sent by the Empress of Russia to M. de Voltaire.. 390
Young's Night Thoughts, translated by M. Letourneur.... 392
On the mixture of Tragedy and Comedy in the Deserter of M. Sedaine 393
Death of M. Poinsinet and Anecdotes respecting him 395
Misfortunes of M. de Valdahon and Mademoiselle de Monnier 403
Opinion of the King of Prussia respecting the Emperor Joseph the Second 405
Domestic Arrangements in the House at Ferney 406
Quarrel at Ferney between Father Adam and the Sieur Bigex 409
Recollections of Madame de Caylus, by M. de Voltaire.... 410
Translation of Virgil's Georgics by the Abbé Delille..... 416

HISTORICAL & LITERARY

MEMOIRS AND ANECDOTES.

PART THE FIRST.

January, 1764.

On the twenty-second of last month M. Marmontel took his seat as a member of the French Academy, and according to custom delivered a speech upon the occasion; one of the best that we have had for a long time. It has just been printed. In most cases we are seized with *ennui* and a great desire to yawn, from the very first page of these effusions of eloquence, and when the orator begins the panegyric of Cardinal Richelieu or the Chancellor Seguier, it is scarcely possible to resist the influence of Somnus. The speech in question, however, excites none of these feelings; it is neither too long nor too short, nor is any point in it dwelt upon beyond its due measure. The writer speaks of the dignity of letters, and the virtues of those that cultivate them, in a noble and interesting manner, and without any air of pretension in treating the subject. All is so well entwined together, that nothing seems thrust

in, or said merely because it must be said, but as if it arose naturally out of the subject. Saving and excepting the turn of some phrases, which appear to me not in a good taste, there is nothing to condemn in M. Marmontel's speech, except too extravagant an eulogium of M. de Bougainville, whom he succeeds. This academician, although a man of letters, was blessed with but very moderate talents, and as a private man his reputation for honesty was far from standing high. To his dying day he was never cleared of the suspicion of having been the person, who, eight or ten years ago, put into the hands of the late M. Boyer, Bishop of Mirepoix, the famous ode, written by Piron in an hour of youthful levity; which ode the Bishop shewed to the King, and occasioned Piron's exclusion from the Academy, though his genius and irreproachable manners would have been an honour to it. But M. Bougainville was desirous of the vacant seat himself, and it appears from this, was not scrupulous as to the means he employed for obtaining it. Nor was an act of so much meanness thought any reason for rejecting him, though a *jeu d'esprit*, somewhat too licentious it must be confessed, which had escaped in a thoughtless moment from the pen of a young man, and had been subsequently atoned by so incomparable a production as the *Metromania*, was considered as a reason why Piron was to be rejected. It was on this occasion that Piron

wrote his own epitaph: *Here lies Piron, who was nothing; not even an academician!*

M. Bignon, as director, answered M. Marmontel in the name of the Academy. It cannot be pronounced the worst speech ever made upon such an occasion, among the great choice we have of bad ones: but it was certainly one of the most uncivil. Not a word of compliment did it contain, in any way, to the new member; this tells plainly that he was not honoured with M. Bignon's vote; he is not, however, for that reason, the less honourably elected. The sitting was terminated by M. Marmontel's reading an *Epistle in verse upon the grandeur and feebleness of the human mind.* The beginning was extremely fine, and was very highly applauded; the conclusion was thought feeble, which gave occasion to the remark, that the author had determined to illustrate his subject by his own example.

M. Dorat has just printed a sort of heroic poem, in which there are some very fine things; it is entitled, *Letters from Barnevelt in his Prison to Trueman his Friend.* You know the celebrated English tragedy of *George Barnwell, or the London Merchant.* A very indifferent translation of it, published some fifteen or sixteen years ago, has given this piece considerable reputation in France. M. Dorat tells us in his advertisement, that he had been much tempted to bring the sub-

ject upon the French stage. He has done well to abandon this project. Such a subject as a merchant's clerk, whom his passion for a wretched courtezan leads into the most frightful crimes, even to robbing and murdering an uncle, who had been to him the kindest benefactor, and this clerk about to receive the punishment due to such crimes, can never suit the style of our tragedy. Besides the genius necessary to treat such a subject with success, nothing but extreme truth and nature in the dialogue, and in the play of the performers, could make it succeed upon the stage. M. Dorat, in abandoning his project, has aimed at shewing us at least, that his powers would not have been below the undertaking. He supposes that the unfortunate Barnevelt, in his prison, writes to his friend, and gives him an account of his crime and of the remorse with which it has been followed. You will find in the letter some very beautiful passages written with a nobleness and elegance, which I may say is almost the only fault that I can charge upon the author, for it is not the style in which a merchant's clerk could be supposed to write. The most difficult task that genius had to perform in handling this subject was to give the hero the tone and manners suited to the meanness of his situation, yet at the same time make them pathetic; this I think impossible to be done in French poetry. The reproach therefore, that I urge against M. Dorat

not so much upon himself as upon the instrument he has employed.

February, 1764.

Some wretched compiler, I know not whom, has dared to publish the *Spirit of Caraccioli*, that is to say, the quintessence of the works of the Marquis de Caraccioli, Colonel in the service of the late King of Poland, one of the most detestable writers of the age. A conformity of name may sometimes be a great misfortune, especially when a man of real merit bears one which has been rendered celebrated by a sort of adventurer. The Marquis de Caraccioli, lately appointed minister from the king of the two Sicilies to England, passed through Paris on his way to his embassy. The name alarmed every body, people were ready to shut their doors against him, under the idea that he was the author of those fine works, *Upon personal Enjoyment*, *Upon Gaiety*, &c. &c. Thus a man of infinite merit, of great talents, and a most pleasant companion, was near being shut out of society, from being confounded with the most flat and dull writer of the whole Eng[illegible]istian world. Whoever, therefore, ventured to *don*[illegible]roduce him any where, commonly prefaced the it, [illegible]oduction with crying out, *It is not he! it is* has *he!*

Fra

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that

March, 1764.

A work by M. Morandière, upon recalling

the protestants into France, has been published with the royal approbation and privilege. There is a great distance, I will readily allow, between the public toleration of a book and the toleration of the protestants, but every step is something. It is very true, that while we at Paris just permit a work to be published which recommends the recal of the protestants; the Empress of Russia establishes in her dominions colonies of people of all religions, without the prevailing religion being in any way affected by them; but the thing is, that she does not consult Jansenists or Molinists, clergy or parliaments, upon the subject. Notwithstanding this, I have no doubt but that some ages hence we shall be as tolerant in France as in Russia. I am somewhat like the man at Beaune, in Burgundy, a place which enjoys a high reputation in France for the wit and genius of the inhabitants, where long ears are thought particularly to abound. This man, in a very snowy season, like the present, when the streets of the town were choaked with snow, contracted with the people to clear them at a given price, upon condition that as much time should be allowed him as he judged necessary to complete the operation. This condition was thought perfectly reasonable, and no objection was made to it; by midsummer, therefore, not a flake of snow remained in the town.

For the rest, if it be considered as a remark-

able thing that a book, written professedly in favour of recalling the protestants, should be licensed, the banishment of the Abbé Caveyrac is not less remarkable. This *worthy* man wrote, some years ago, an apology for the revocation of the edict of Nantes, and a justification of the day of St. Bartholomew. One may easily figure to oneself that a man with a heart so mild, so philanthropic, would make, provided he were furnished with good strong arms, an excellent rower in his Majesty's galleys. It is not, however, this fine work that has raised an outcry against him, but he was discovered to be the author of several things that have been published in favour of the Jesuits, among others of the *Appeal to Reason*, and of a volume entitled *It is time to speak!* For these the parliament, considering no doubt a friend of the Jesuits as a more dangerous man than an enemy to humanity, has banished this mild Abbé de Caveyrac the country for ever.

March, 1764.

A small work of about seventy pages, entitled *An Essay on Luxury*, has just been published. It is the production of the Chevalier de St. Lambert, and will in due time appear in the Encyclopedia, under the article *Luxury*. For this purpose was it written, and the present publication appears to be a theft from the author, who had probably lent it to some not very honest friend. Though the

chevalier enjoys a considerable share of literary reputation at Paris, this is the first thing from him that has ever appeared in print; his fugitive pieces of poetry are well known, and are in every body's hands. The thing which is to fix for ever his rank in the literary world is a poem on the *Four Seasons*, upon which he has been at work for a number of years, and which he proposes soon to lay before the public.

The *Essay on Luxury* has not been successful. The reasoning is thought superficial, and the manner in which it is written dry and destitute of force. A dry manner of writing is certainly the charge of all others to which M. de St. Lambert is the most open, for it is impossible to deny that he thinks deeply, and commonly with justness. But in society he wants that warmth which renders truth so much more affecting, and which predisposes the heart in favour of the person speaking; he would, I have no doubt, be an excellent epigrammatist if he would permit himself to be so. Among the objections made to the essay are, "that nothing remains upon the mind "after having read it." That may be, yet not be the fault of the writer. "That the definition of "luxury given by the author is false."—He might have given a very excellent one which I should not esteem one atom more, for, God be thanked, I laugh at all definitions and method.—"That he often answers the objections he makes

" in a manner little satisfactory, and that the his-
" torical facts quoted are not always happily ap-
" plied."

I will readily acknowledge it a very insufficient answer to those who assert that luxury enervates and destroys courage, to urge that under the command of a Luxembourg, a Villars, a Count de Saxe, the French, who are perhaps the most luxurious people now existing, shewed themselves the most courageous. For if it be true that luxury tends to enervate the health and constitution, and to diminish that vigour of body which has a sensible influence upon the vigour of the soul, it must certainly weaken courage, in the proper acceptation of the term, although persons thus circumstanced may perchance fight well under an experienced chief, even supposing that this chief has his camp filled with shows and courtezans. But if, from the effects of luxury, a simple marshal of the camp requires at present more equipages, more attendants, a larger train in every way, than the King of Prussia, *summus in orbe imperator*, at the head of his armies, it may very possibly happen that this marshal of the camp will one day pay very dear with his person, and besides that he will occasion the entire failure of a campaign.

A great deal has been written upon the subject of luxury. Some, eager to attack it, represent it as the source of all the public ills; others, ingenious in defending it, paint it as a principal

source of the opulence and prosperity of nations. I am very much disposed to rank this dispute among the number of those useless debates which, as well as the greater part of all political discussions, are only vain and ostentatious exercises of talents, in which the idle fence, at a certain loss to themselves, for promoting the progress of reason, and the happiness of the people. If luxury be of as great advantage to a state as they say, to make any apology for it against the attacks of austere minds seems to me wholly superfluous; and if it be as injurious as the latter assure us, the time that they consume in proving this point would be much better employed in teaching us the means to preserve ourselves from it; this would be an undertaking essentially useful, and truly worthy of a philosopher, but not by any means so easy as the other. The term luxury is in fact only a vague and relative one. The disputes which it occasions may often be reduced to a mere contest of words. M. de St. Lambert says that there is less luxury in Poland than in England, or at Geneva; I maintain that there is much more, although the country is certainly in proportion far less rich.

In fact every thing is luxury. Jean Jacques Rousseau is in the right when he considers the first man who put on shoes as introducing luxury into his country; but that very idea ought to make him overlook our more elegant shoes, and

the gold or diamond buckles with which they are fastened. The one is as natural as the other, or rather the one is only a necessary consequence of the other. A state of disease is a state of luxury, since there are whole nations to whom disease is unknown; they have only two modes of existence, either to be alive or to die. In the first of these states they may feel themselves occasionally more or less vigorous, but they know of no such thing as lying between a pair of sheets, and calling in a man, who, by virtue of a certain title conferred upon him, and in consequence of certain systems which he has adopted, orders certain remedies the effects of which he does not know, for ills of the cause of which he is wholly ignorant. The luxury of physicians would be one very well retrenched in an enlightened government, if the means for retrenching it could be discovered.

In order to write usefully upon this subject, and satisfy solid and reflecting minds, the question ought to be treated on a more extended scale, and the effects that luxury has produced in various nations should be carefully developed; facts alone are interesting, all the rest is but to wander at random, and often to fall into error. In former times a lover made a present to his mistress of a block of hewn stone, and the daughter of Cheops, King of Egypt, had so many lovers from whom she received so many hewn stones, that she was at length enabled to build one of the finest pyramids

in the kingdom. But if this mass of stones, the necessary preliminary to the marriage of a princess of Egypt, be alarming to the imagination, the multitude of items necessary for the wedding cloaths of a daughter even in a very humble situation, at the present day, is not in any way less alarming; the four quarters of the globe are ransacked to supply it.

Luxury was carried to great excess in Rome in the days of Augustus, but it was in a very different style from ours. I know not whether the sumptuous manner in which the Roman tables were served may enter into any comparison with the refinement that now prevails at the tables in this country; but I know that their expences in cloaths and moveables were not to be compared with ours. The purple was the colour of every thing the most sumptuous in the state, but we clothe our servants in it. Our wants are so multiplied that, I repeat it again, the man who lives the most simply, puts the industry of all the quarters of the globe under contribution, nor can any thing arrive from the Indies or the Windward Islands the influence of which I do not perceive in a square of between three and four toises which I occupy in the new treet of the Luxembourg.

The objects of luxury then being so different in one age and in another, its results cannot be the same at all times. If I, an obscure individual, occupy more hands for my comfort and support

than were employed by a consul or prætor of Rome, it is impossible that the moderns should execute the great public works that were carried on by the ancients. We want too many tailors, ribband-weavers, perfumers, hair-dressers, manufacturers of every sort, to spare hands enough for the construction of public monuments. An Ædile of Rome must have been in a situation to give more magnificent entertainments, such as were more really grand, than a king of France, because the latter has in his states too great a number of little clerks who want laced ruffles to their shirts, and gold lace to their coats. It is evident that two such very different modes of luxury must produce very different effects upon the minds and manners, and this reflection alone is sufficient to decide what degree of value we should attach to the writings of those who reason upon luxury in general, and support their reasonings upon facts drawn at hazard from the history of different ages.

The great principle of M. de Saint Lambert, upon which he has founded the whole of his essay is, that luxury is no way dangerous in itself; and that it becomes advantageous or hurtful according to whether the state is well or ill governed. The author employs a great deal of wit and subtlety to prove his opinion; but it must be displayed in a manner much more profound, before it can be possible to decide how far it is well-founded. The

love of riches, a taste for expence, relaxation in the morals, indifference to the laws and to the country, have no essential connection together. This I grant, if you choose to insist upon it; but if all these symptoms have invariably manifested themselves at the same time, such a historical fact cannot but form a very strong argument against luxury.

An empire may have risen to the highest degree of riches, of honour, and of glory. So brilliant an epoch is often produced by the genius of one man alone; at other times it may be the work of chance, of the concurrence of a thousand fortunate circumstances. But when the glory and the power of an empire are well established, when the question is only to maintain it in the same flourishing state, can we promise ourselves to see it governed by as great princes as when its state was more precarious, and it could not be guaranteed from surrounding dangers without the exertion of great talents and great virtues?

Among the sixty farmers-general which Cardinal Fleury called the pillars of the state, France reckons M. Bouret, who, by the occupation of several places in the department of the finances, is confined to an annual income of no more than twelve or fifteen hundred thousand livres. It is but according to the usual order of things, that he who did not acquire a fortune by his own industry, will never know how properly to enjoy it; nor is it

surprising, that M. Bouret should, at the end of the year, find himself ruined. But his expences have at least borne a distinguished air. One day he invited a lady to supper, to whom he was under some obligation; it was at the very beginning of the season for green pease, when only a handful are to be bought for a handful of louis. M. Bouret's guest being, on account of her indifferent health, ordered to live upon milk only, made it a condition of accepting the invitation, that pease should not be one of the dishes at supper, lest she should be tempted by them. This clause was agreed to, but when she who made it arrived, she found in the vestibule her nurse, a cow, with whose milk she was to be regaled, feeding upon a large bucket full of pease. Another time the ingenious M. Bouret had the honour of receiving the most Christian King at his country house, Croix-Fontaine. The first thing his majesty observed in the drawing-room was a very large folio book. On opening it he found it was a manuscript which had for its title page *True Happiness*. On every page was written, *The King is come to visit Bouret*, with the date of the year from 1760 to 1800. To complete the thing, this was only the first volume, and the second in order to be of an equal size, would of course go down to the year of grace 1810. I would ask how many great poets a man of genius like Bouret might be expected to have as fellow citizens? how many great philosophers,

how many great magistrates, statesmen, generals? This problem is complicated, but if we cannot solve it, it is because of the weakness of our heads; for the calculation is as easy as that of any other problem; the only question is to know in what way it is to be viewed.

What I know very well is, that a bomb driven from its mortar by a certain quantity of powder, must, on account of such a certain resistance of the air, necessarily describe such a parabola. It would rise to such a height, but when arrived there would of necessity descend. Here we have the symbol and the history of empires. He who should find the means of stopping the bomb at its highest point of elevation, would be a god; he who undertakes to do it whether by words or by making the *attempt*, is *only* a madman.

M. de la Chapelle formerly first clerk in the office for foreign affairs, has employed the leisure afforded him by his retreat from business, in translating the *History of Scotland under the reigns of Mary Stuart and James the Sixth, till the accession of the latter to the throne of England, by Dr. William Robertson.* The translation is in three large volumes 12mo. This work enjoys a very high reputation in England; I have seen English who have ranked it with all the most valuable historical works of antiquity. If we may judge of the difficulty of a talent by its variety, we should say that no talent is more difficult than that of writing

history well; it is one in which the moderns have certainly made very little progress; and in all ages twenty poets and orators might be enumerated for one historian. If you read Dr. Robertson's history, in the translation which has just appeared, you will perhaps be astonished at its great reputation in England. I do not mean to say but that the perusal will afford you much pleasure; but, in my opinion, it wants that vigour which moves and interests the reader at the will of the historian. It is true, that the principal subjects of admiration in Dr. Robertson's writings are, his fine colouring, and the purity and elegance of his stile;—this work is regarded as one of the best written things in the English language. In this point of view, Dr. Robertson enjoys a great advantage over his fellow-countryman, the philosophic David Hume; his style is not much esteemed in England. But, under the pen of the translator, the colouring is tarnished and weakened, and thus the great success which the work has experienced in London, and the little it has met with at Paris, may be equally just. For the rest, Dr. Robertson is a Scotchman, as well as Mr. Hume; and it is somewhat remarkable, that the two most distinguished writers in Great Britain, at this time, should be both from the Northern division of the island. England, in this respect, yields to Scotland; but it does not appear that both together can furnish more great writers than France: will this scarcity become

general, or is it now the turn of some other nation to furnish Europe with men of genius? What is very remarkable, with regard to Dr. Robertson's work is, that he wrote it at a little village in Scotland, where he was the minister, without ever having been in London. Where then could he have acquired that grace, that elegance of tone and style, that colouring which so charms his readers, and which we generally suppose is only to be acquired by an intercourse, not only with the world, but with the most polished and cultivated part of it. The fact is, that if the soul be endowed with a native delicacy and sensibility, it will become graceful and elegant, even in a desert; and without these qualities it remains rough and harsh in the land of taste itself.

April, 1764.

The piece of *The London Merchant, or George Barnwell*, which is called a *Domestic Tragedy*, is exceedingly popular in England, and has had a considerable reputation in France, since the translation that was published about twelve years ago. Lillo, the author of this tragedy, has left no other works which are held in much estimation. I have already had the honour of mentioning to you the imitation which one of our young poets, M. Dorat, has published of the principal situation in this piece, in a sort of heroic poem, under the title of *A Letter from Barnevelt in his Prison, to his Friend*

Trueman, written after he had murdered his uncle and benefactor, at the instigation of an infamous mistress. M. Diderot has sent me the following remarks upon M. Dorat's poem.

" Barnevelt's epistle to his friend Trueman appears to me a very feeble production, without warmth, without poetry, incapable of exciting emotion, or if any be experienced in reading it, it is a homage which the heart of sensibility pays to the situation of the man, not to the talents of the poet. Dorat, supported by the genius of Lillo, and rich in a number of delicate touches which the latter has spread over his tragedy, has yet composed a very moderate poem, in which he does not on one single occasion rise to any thing like the height of his model. What does he make Sorogoud say when struck with the poignard of Barnevelt, his nephew:

'God! what a morn of terror doth await thee,
O, my dear Barnevelt!—Far, far from me,
What dost thou?—Why, in this cruel moment,
Wert thou not by? thou hadst defended me.—
Watch o'er his days, Oh God!—watch o'er his youth!—
And from a like sad fate preserve his age.'

" What coldness! what dulness!—how long and dragging is this apostrophe. In Lillo, the murdered uncle exclaims, 'All gracious Heaven, 'regard the prayer of thy dying servant! bless 'with thy choicest blessings my dearest nephew! 'forgive my murderer, and take my fleeting soul

'to endless mercy!'—Certainly M. Dorat did not perceive what constitutes the real sublime in this passage. He ought to have felt that the whole effect of the speech consists in its brevity, in these two ideas linked one within the other, '*bless my* '*dearest nephew and forgive my murderer.*' The dying man supposes himself addressing the Almighty for two different persons, and it is for the same: this is expressed in two words.

"M. Dorat deviates even more from the original in the following imitation. Barnwell, in Lillo, when painting to his friend Trueman the excess of his passion for his mistress, says, 'So 'far was I lost to goodness, so devoted to the 'author of my ruin, that had she insisted on my 'murdering thee—I think—I should have done 'it.'—Trueman answers, 'Prithee, aggravate thy 'faults no more;'—to which Barnwell replies, 'I think I should!—thus good and generous as 'you are, I should have murdered you!'—Trueman's answer to this, is to me of inestimable beauty. What does he say to his friend, who assures him a second time that if his mistress had required it he should have murdered him?—he answers, 'We have not yet embraced, and may 'be interrupted—come to my arms.'—I counsel any one, whose heart is not rent with these words, to throw himself over the shoulder of Deucalion or Pyrrha, for he is a stone. But how has M. Dorat

given this passage?—he makes Barnevelt write thus:

'I had, perhaps, from heaven received some virtue,
Fanny destroyed it with a single look.
If, in my phrenzy, Fanny had commanded,
This hand had murdered even thee, my friend.'

"I tell you this man has no taste; he rests upon Barnwell's first protestation to Trueman, that a word, a look, a sign from Fanny would have been sufficient to make him his murderer; he does not feel that the whole effect is produced by the repetition of this assurance. Had the poet felt the force of this properly, Barnevelt would have hesitated—would have paused, as if interrupted,—and in the same moment replied, '*Yes, I should have murdered thee, my friend.*'

"There is another defect which applies to the whole epistle;—this is, that it ought to have been preceded by one, forcibly painting the incredible and horrible address with which Fanny led on the young Barnevelt to the commission of this crime. This ought to have been painted in such a manner, that the reader would have exclaimed inwardly at every line, 'Heaven preserve me from 'ever meeting with such a creature, for I know 'not what she would do with me.'—After this reflection, Barnevelt would have become naturally, and almost without any effort, an object of the utmost commiseration. This Lillo felt very forcibly."

I, having represented to M. Diderot, in con-

sequence of the above remarks, that perhaps the faults, with which he reproached M. Dorat, were as much those of the language in which the poet writes as of the poet himself, he answers, "No, no, it is not the fault of the language, it is the fault of the poet, whose soul felt no emotion as he wrote. Bid me make Barnevelt speak in prose, and you shall see. Dorat did not feel that he ought to have given some of those deep and characteristic touches of the consummate art with which a woman of a truly depraved mind seduces a young man. Fanny ought to have rendered the misery in which he lived insupportable to him; and he ought to have painted this misery to his friend with those feelings of agony, which, the greater the sensibility of heart of the lover, the less he is able to resist. He ought to have taken advantage of the first favour granted, and which he should not have supposed granted till the lover was bound by the most terrible oaths to obey whatever she commanded. To paint a scene of this kind, of such mingled passion and terror, was not in any way impossible to the language; it was in the head of the poet that the power of doing it was wanting. Only recur to the scenes of passion in the Clytemnestra of Racine, and then condemn the language if you can."

Though I am ready to assent to the truth and justice of these remarks, I still cannot think M. Dorat's work contemptible. When I would have

thrown the blame upon the language in which the poet writes, it was not so much the French language as French poetry that I meant to arraign. I have not the least doubt but that M. Diderot would transfuse all those sublime touches to which he alludes in the English tragedy, in the most energetic manner into French prose: but I very much doubt whether even M. de Voltaire or the great Racine, that is to say, the two poets, who, of all that ever wrote, have best understood the charm and magic of their art,—I doubt much, I say, whether even they could equal, in French verse, the effect of the English prose. I am perfectly conversant with all the fine passages in Clytemnestra, to which he alludes, and they confirm me in my judgment. French verse in fact is a language of too much pomp and parade, too much shackled with rules ever to suit very well with dramatic poetry. It is this circumstance most undoubtedly which has occasioned the French theatre to deviate so widely from that simplicity, that truth and nature, that concise and sublime energy, which form the great charm of the ancient theatre, and are the great delight of all persons of real taste. It is this that has drawn the poet into those long declamatory effusions which are so contrary to the proper nature of the drama. M. de Voltaire has often complained of the monotony of his language, and its want of elevated rhymes; and to the opinion of such a master I think some

deference may well be paid. Besides, it is easy to feel that the necessity of rhyming, in spite of these difficulties, must throw the poet at every moment out of his subject, and suggest to him things that no way belong to it. It is easy also to conceive, that a style of writing, so far removed from nature, must have a very important influence upon the character and manners of the personages: thus it happens that we accustom ourselves insensibly to seeing beings represented upon the stage that have no model in nature, and by degrees a theatrical code is established, according to which all dramatic works are to be judged, without comparing them with the manners and lives of those whom they are intended to represent.

In comparing the speeches of Racine with those of Euripides, we see that the first are only a paraphrase of the second. I readily allow that these paraphrases have an irresistible charm, and are full of the most noble and affecting poetry; nor do I by any means seek to derogate from the glory of the greatest poet of our nation, I speak only of the instrument which he was constrained to employ. If the ancients had employed hexameters in their dramatic poetry, the same thing would have happened to them that has happened to the French dramatic poets: this kind of verse would have been too poetical for a mode of writing which requires so much nature and energetic simplicity. But they made use of iambics in their dramatic

compositions; and this measure, combining all the advantages of a connected speech, was liable to none of the inconveniences of our Alexandrine verses. Such is also the dramatic verse of the Italians. But the French language admitting only a vague prosody, cannot employ this kind of versification; and as soon as their verse begins to take the style of conversation, it is forced into a peculiar kind of turns, which necessarily create diffuseness with a sort of redundancy: these, in fact, constitute its principal harmony, but at the same time render it monotonous and little suited to theatrical declamation.

But to return to M. Dorat. I acknowledge that I think his *Epistle* from Barnevelt feeble, and that he is every where below his subject. But the public, in judging a young poet, has thought it right rather to pass over the subject he has chosen, perhaps not a very judicious one, and consider only the talents of the poet. We find some very fine passages: as for instance,

All things seem withered by my breath impure,
All nature from the murderer's sight recoils,
So much, that God, who chastens human crimes,
With care paternal guards the good man's fate.
It is a sacred trust, which to the earth
He has confided; and the hour that sees
The murderer's hand uprais'd against his life,
Convulses nature's self. In striking him
The dearest ties are broken, and the loss
Brings mourning to the universe entire.

It must be confessed that it is *guarding the good man's fate* but poorly, to suffer him to be murdered by his nephew, and that it would have been a shorter way to avert the crime and save the lives of both. But this is not so much the question in poetry; we are considering the verses only, and when a young man can write such lines, we hail the omen gladly, and are rejoiced to see hope beam upon us; the more so, since M. de Voltaire is no longer young, and the dearth of poets seems daily to be augmented; it is the more painful to witness such poverty after having been so rich.

We have just been presented with a new work translated from the German, *A Historical, Political, Civil, and Physical Description of the Island of Iceland, by Mr Horrebows, who was sent thither by the King of Denmark; two vols.* 12*mo.* The principal object of M. Horrebows' mission was to refute the very inexact ideas respecting this island published by Mr. Anderson, a Hamburgher, a few years ago. Those who have had occasion to study and know the inhabitants of Iceland, speak with such high eulogium of their penetration, of the acuteness of their understandings, of their natural taste for the fine arts, particularly for poetry, of the goodness of their character, of the sweetness of their manners, that one almost wishes to go and end one's days among them. If these facts were well established, it would aim a terrible blow

at the president de Montesquieu's theory respecting the influence of climate upon the character and manners of the people. Not that any doubt can be entertained of such an influence operating to a certain extent, but to what extent, or in what manner it operates, are questions far too complicated to admit of a hope that we shall ever resolve them satisfactorily. The most delicate shadings in the manners of a nation are undoubtedly the result of one or many physical and necessary causes. But these causes are so various, their manner of acting is often so secret, their concurrence is so uncertain, the quantity of each cause which is requisite to produce any particular effect is so little determined, that we can never expect to know with any certainty the manner in which they act, or what will be the result. There are no doubt good reasons why the Icelanders should be so richly endowed with the qualities above enumerated, although according to the president de Montesquieu's theory they ought to be directly the reverse; and indeed their neighbours, the Laplanders, do not in any way resemble them. There is this difference between the processes of nature and the reasonings of philosophy, that the one employs fifty concurrent causes to produce a single effect, and that the other always would deduce fifty effects from a single cause. Wherever we turn our eyes, we only find proofs

of our own weakness,—how much we are in our infancy.

The edition of the *Works of Corneille with M. de Voltaire's Commentary*, undertaken for the benefit of this illustrious poet's great-niece, has just been delivered to the subscribers. A list of these subscribers is given at the end of the last volume; among the names we see with satisfaction the greater part of the crowned heads, and many other sovereign princes of Europe. The edition consists of twelve large volumes 8vo. which contain, besides all the works of Peter Corneille, some pieces by his brother Thomas, some by Racine, and some by foreign poets, which M. de Voltaire has translated, to serve as objects of comparison with certain of his hero's tragedies. Posterity will cherish, with a sort of veneration, the memory of what has been done by M. de Voltaire for the only remaining descendant of the family of so great a man. Mademoiselle Corneille, born in obscurity and indigence, unknown to her relation M. Bernard de Fontenelle, has found a father in M. de Voltaire. To him she owes her education and establishment in the world. From the moment that he took her under his protection, he placed her above want, by settling upon her an annuity of fifteen hundred livres a year for her life. He afterwards gave her a fortune of twenty

thousand livres upon her marrying M. Dupuy, an officer of dragoons established at Gex, near his estates. Lastly he has taken upon himself the arduous and subaltern task of a commentator, in order to give the public an opportunity of contributing by their liberality towards the fortune of his *protégée*. Madame Dupuy has already received more than fifty thousand livres from this subscription.

If M. de Voltaire expected to obtain from his contemporaries the justice which posterity will render him a hundred fold, he will find himself much deceived. The poison of envy infects too powerfully the minds of a large portion of mankind to admit of their ever being equitable towards those to whom they are nearly approximated; justice is only rendered where distance of place, or remoteness of time precludes the possibility of our self-love being wounded by an allowed superiority. How I hate those dirty minds, which, full of a mean jealousy, congratulate themselves, and think they have obtained a great victory, when they can ascribe a kind or generous action to some unworthy motive. Shame on them!—Does not vanity itself cease to be blameable, is it not even ennobled when it is directed to laudable objects, when it confines itself to prompting us to great and generous actions? But nothing can disarm envy; it must wither with its impure breath whatever comes in its way; nor, till the hand of time

has passed over what it had tarnished, can virtue and truth shine forth again in their native lustre. The mist which had been cast before men's eyes then clears away, the enchantment is broke, and a new generation admires with enthusiasm the man who among his contemporaries had been the object of calumny and persecution. But he, alas! is no more, and while his glory becomes that of his nation, and public veneration renders his name immortal and inattackable, the same spirit, over which his fame at length has triumphed, does not cease to torment and persecute others whose talents may give occasion to their being suspected of having equal claims to glory and immortality. O, Athenians! you are but children, but you are sometimes most cruel and foolish children.

Never was any thing like the outcry which has been raised against M. de Voltaire's commentaries upon the works of Corneille. There is not a gossip, a would-be bel-esprit of any citizen-coterie who does not hold forth, upon the criticisms which the commentator has permitted himself to make, who does not consider them as his own personal affair. The most moderate, in assenting to almost all that the critic says, do not the less charge him with seeking to gratify his own vanity and jealousy, with the base design of throwing down the statue of the great Corneille, that his own might be erected in its place. In vain does the commentator studiously repeat, at almost every page, what

he ought only to have said once for all, that Corneille was a great man, that he has created every thing, that his defects are those of his age, and his beauties are his own,—these repeated eulogiums have remained unnoticed, whilst a terrible outcry is raised against the criticisms. The censors admit the justness of the criticisms but are indignant at them. Even those who, if Corneille were alive, would search out his defects with the greatest pertinacity, and pass over his beauties unnoticed, are the very people who are now the most eager in crying out sacrilege, because the first literary character in the nation has dared to criticise one who has been dead long enough to be canonized and to have become a classic. To whom shall it be permitted to scrutinize the merits and demerits of an author, if not to M. de Voltaire? —O, absurd and metaphysical people! if you must always be prying into the secret recesses of the heart of man?—if you must be always judging the hidden intentions and views of your masters? —endeavour at least to render your charges consistent with the unworthy views you have dared impute to them,—do not refuse them such a portion of address as passion gives to the most stupid and imbecile among you.

One day M. de Voltaire was playing at piquet in the drawing-room at Luneville with a very devout old lady, when a storm came on. The lady began to tremble, and begged to have the

window-shutters closed, crossing herself over and over again, expressing the greatest terror at being, in a moment so awful, in company with such an impious wretch, whom the Almighty was very likely to strike with his thunder. Voltaire, indignant at the insult, rose hastily from his seat and said: "Know, madam, that I have spoken "more worthily of God in a single line of my "poetry, than you will ever think of him in your "whole life."—Such is the only proper answer that can be made to those babblers who have raised an outcry against his commentaries. "Know "that in spite of your cold enthusiasm for Cor-"neille, his censor has praised him more worthily "in a single line, than you will ever do with all "your miserable exclamations."

Is it any thing very extraordinary that the most seductive writer in all France, the poet who is never abandoned by a grace and a charm peculiarly his own;—is it very extraordinary that he should be wounded by that occasional clumsiness, by that dry and harsh manner, by that want of purity and elegance, which perpetually shock a man of refined taste in reading the works of Corneille? Every enlightened reader must say that there are great beauties in Corneille, but he must also say that they are scattered about, and obscured in an immense dunghill. And shall M. de Voltaire be the only person not allowed to feel the distaste which this offal must inspire?—nay,

even supposing that we may think some of his observations not altogether just, is it wholly unpardonable in him to be sometimes in an error. We know that he has all his life been the enthusiastic supporter of that unalterable purity, of that never varying elegance, which form the great charm of the works of Racine; and how can a taste so refined dispense with that sort of beauty which constitutes the soul, the very essence, of true poetry. But if M. de Voltaire had only been following the inspirations of a mean and dishonest jealousy, far from calling our attention at every moment to the admirable poetry of Racine, as he has done in all his works, and more particularly in his *Commentaries on Corneille*,—far from doing this he would studiously endeavour to make us, if possible, forget Racine; for he is the man whose works will be always brought into comparison with his own, and against whom he will have to maintain a struggle in all succeeding ages. Far then, even if he were capable of the mean envy ascribed to him, from aiming to destroy the reputation of Corneille, that very envy would have taught him that this writer was the one whom he ought to extol, to elevate above all others. His genius is so totally dissimilar from his own that no rivalship ever can subsist between them, nor will the kind of beauties which are admired in Corneille ever prevent the merits and beauties of Voltaire being duly felt; whereas the purity, the elegance, the

sweet and majestic beauty of Racine, will always excite the kind of admiration, will always call forth the kind of eulogiums which M. de Voltaire has eagerly endeavoured all his life to merit and to share.

I am persuaded that every man with a candid and liberal mind, who should read without prejudice the *Commentaries upon Corneille*, will find that M. de Voltaire has often been too indulgent, at least too sparing of his criticisms, particularly in the early volumes. It is true that we see, in proportion as he proceeds in his labour, his disgust increased, and his natural aversion to whatever wants taste, truth, and delicacy resume the ascendancy; yet even, when grown somewhat impatient under his painful and irksome task, he has suffered a harsh or disobliging expression to escape him, by what eulogiums is it afterwards repaired, how much does he seem to fear shocking the public by criticising too severely a poet to whom they have given the name of *Great*. I have not the least doubt that this very fear, which creeps out in all his remarks is a principal cause of the ridiculous outcry they have occasioned; that it has emboldened the greater part of our *beaux-esprits* and aristarch ladies, to insult this first of literary characters, and forget the respect due to one, who, in this sterile period, upholds almost singly the glory and reputation of his country in Europe.

These reflections I have thought due by way

of apology for M. de Voltaire; now to my own opinion upon the work. You will find in the commentaries a number of remarks negligently written, put together in haste, little considered, sometimes unimportant; while others will appear susceptible of greater development and elucidation. But I believe no one, capable of thinking justly, will find that aim at depreciating the genius of Corneille with which he has been so unjustly reproached. If minds highly cultivated and deeply imbued with the best works, both ancient and modern, have a right to find these commentaries sometimes light, and to wish more depth in them, I think they will notwithstanding remain inseparable from the works of Corneille, and will be the best guide our young people can take to form their taste in poetry. After saying this, if I were tempted to publish what I think of the great Corneille, I should probably run the greatest hazard of getting myself stoned. Such is the fate of those who will not be led blindly by the vulgar opinion;—who dare examine decisions consecrated by time?

Peter Corneille received from nature genius, elevation, a powerful and enlarged mind. If to these great qualities had been added sensibility of heart, a soul tender, flexible, easy to be moved, he would have been one of the greatest poetical geniusses that the world ever knew. It is the heart alone which renders a man truly eloquent,

it is that alone which in barbarous, as well as cultivated, ages, gives that affecting character to poetry which renders the poet immortal. The heart of Corneille was, if I may use the expression, arid; the feelings wanted there he was obliged to supply by his head, and reasoning every where took the place of sentiment. Born only at the dawn of a very brilliant day, he had not the happiness of knowing the true sources of taste; his mind could not receive its cultivation from our masters the Greeks and the Romans, and his genius never arrived at the perfection of which it was capable. The passion for Spanish literature, which had infected a great part of Europe, put the last stroke to corrupting the taste of Corneille. This poet, full of energy and warmth, established the Spanish influence upon the French stage,—fixed declamation and false emphasis by the side of elevation and grandeur. If Corneille with his great talents, with the art of reasoning which he possessed so eminently, had applied himself to the bar, he would have been undoubtedly the greatest advocate ever known; but dramatic poetry which was then to be created in France required talents of a very different kind. His situations are commonly sublime, his conceptions great and wonderful: but I must venture to say, in defiance of all who may exclaim against me, that his execution rarely satisfies a cultivated mind, a person of refined taste. His characters almost always fail in

being natural; in the finest moments it is almost always the poet that is great, he almost always distracts our attention from the actor. The genius of his statesmen consists in declaiming those maxims in politics of which our dogmatical books are full, but which never are made use of in transacting business. His tyrants and his villains have their sayings, and spout out freely those principles which they certainly have in their hearts, but which, far from having them always in their mouths, they scarcely dare own even to themselves. People with tender hearts, overflowing with sensibility, have also their maxims, are for ever reasoning, often in a very abstruse way, always with great coldness, instead of being hurried away by sentiment. The passions, and especially love, instead of being a consequence of the most secret emotions of the soul, are in his pieces the result of a series of common-place reasonings.

Thus it is that truth has been banished the French stage, from its very cradle, so that even in the finest pieces of Corneille we cannot help observing "*all that is very grand*," but the thing could not have happened so. In effect, let a lover, a tyrant, a conspirator, be put into action upon the great stage of the world, and if he were to utter a single word of what would be given to him by Corneille, he would appear a madman, and be hooted as such. How such constant and puerile deviation from truth can have been so long en-

dured upon the stage by an assemblage of discerning spectators is very astonishing, and if they can applaud it, have we not a right to condemn their taste?

One of the things the best established in our heads, and which we hear repeated every day, is, that there is nobody but Corneille who knows how to make the Romans speak. I am not sure whether it be not Louis the Fourteenth and the great Condé that have decided thus, and of whom an ignorant public have become the echo. But Louis, born with an instinct which made him love great things, had very moderate talents, and still less cultivation, while the Prince de Condé knew how to gain battles, but had no knowledge whatever of the genius of Rome. To talk with elevation of liberty and the republic, is not sufficient to give the air and manner of a Roman. When any one ventures to introduce the name of a very great character into his piece, it is necessary to know not only the facts that history has recorded of him, but also the turn of ideas and the manners of his age; now nobody could know less of the turn of ideas among the Romans, of their manners, of the tone that reigned among them than Corneille; he had only learnt from Spanish books the tone and manners of chivalry. It was not that he had not read the ancient authors like any other person; that is to say, he had read them with as little intelligence and fruit as the

majority of those students, many years of whose youth is devoted to them; a study which ought to form their tastes and enlarge their minds, but which they quit without knowing to any purpose the authors over which they have been poring. Without seizing the character and genius of their nation or their age, they have only learnt to associate modern ideas with the speeches of the ancients to which they have not the remotest relation. If Corneille had never treated any other subjects than such as the Cid, his tone would have been always true; but in treating Roman subjects, he gives his personages the principles, and makes them talk the language of chivalry; they are full of that romantic generosity, of those pompous and emphatic ceremonials, which no Roman ever thought of. As an instance in point, we need only advert to the famous scene in Cinna which begins by: *Take a seat, Cinna.* In this scene not a word is uttered on either side that is not a positive absurdity. The author has, in fact, transformed Augustus into a king of Castile, who reproaches his vassal with a felony; the true Augustus, such as we know him from history, would not have said a single word of what Corneille makes him say, and Cinna would have answered in a style as widely different. Those who have learned from the letters of Cicero the manner in which business was transacted at Rome, could never hear with patience a line either of this

famous scene in Cinna, where Augustus consults with Cinna and Maximus whether he should keep or lay down the imperial dignity, or of that boasted scene with Sertorius, on the subject of politics, which has given occasion to so many fools to say that Corneille would have been a great statesman if his destiny had led him to guide the helm of the state. None but children can imagine that public business in real life is carried on as we see it represented in tragedies; but minds of solid judgment, men of severe and refined taste, require truth in the dialogue, and detest false glare and mere declamation.

One is astonished to find M. de Voltaire exclaim in some of the very fine passages of Corneille:—"This is indeed superior to every thing "of the finest writing that any other nation can "boast; the ancients have written in comparison "nothing but mere declamation."—The choice of this term is particularly unfortunate; the thing of all others, which the tragic poets of Athens understood the least, was declamation. The speeches they wrote may be very foreign to our littlenesses of manners; but they are remarkable for their truth, and this is what will ensure immortality to their works. Instead of this, a time may arrive, and a people may arise, to whom the great Corneille will appear fit for nothing but to impose *upon children.* Till that time arrives, however, mum!

M. de Voltaire, after having amused us during the whole winter with his tales, has just collected them into a volume, with some other pieces in prose, under the title of *Tales by William Vadé.* The late Vadé, whose name M. de Voltaire has been pleased to borrow, was a writer of comic-operas after the ancient fashion, and some bad pieces of poetry of low life. This great man would no longer live in the remembrance of any one, but for M. de Voltaire. In the collection now presented to us, besides the tales already published, are some others which are no great matter,—a life of Moliere, with a summary of his writings,—and several trifles from the same author, published at different times, which are uncommonly lively and airy;—one is very glad to have all these things together. The only piece that I could have wished omitted, is, the *Remarks upon the English Theatre.* I am sorry for the honour of M. Vadé, to see him maintain that Boileau's *Art of Poetry* is more poetical than that of Horace; that it is a copy superior to the original.

On the fourth of this month, the council of state reversed the decision of the parliament of Toulouse, in consequence of which the unfortunate Calas was broke upon the wheel two years ago. This horrible and tragical event, a deplorable monument of the most atrocious phrenzy and fanaticism, has excited the interest of all Europe,

and will imprint an eternal stain on the characters of the execrable judges by whom it was pronounced. Notwithstanding their tedious remonstrances, in which they would fain persuade us that on them alone depends the safety of France, with all reasonable people they will ever stand convicted of having assassinated the life and honour of a citizen living under the safeguard and protection of the laws, by a most unjust and atrocious sentence. I have heard it said, by persons who had seen the record of the proceedings at Toulouse, that all laws, divine and human, were violated in them; that they were a tissue of acts null in themselves. When, by such proceedings, an old man of irreproachable character is brought to a most horrible and infamous death, it appears to me, that something more ought to be done, than merely to reverse the sentence; it is grievous to think that such judges are still permitted to dispose of the lives, the honour, and the fortunes of their fellow citizens. A counsellor of this parliament, being in a circle last winter, was reproached with conduct so unheard of. He thought to excuse himself and his brethren, by saying, "*There is no horse so good that he does not sometimes stumble.*"—"*Be it so,*" replied a very clever woman who was in company, "*but a whole stable, sir!*"—If any thing could add to our indignation, it would be the meanness of the expression employed in this excuse.

On the day when the sentence was reversed, the council of state consisted of more than sixty members, ministers as well as magistrates; of this number, twenty were of opinion, that the sentence should be sent back to the parliament of Toulouse for revision, out of a sort of respect to that body as being a sovereign court; all the others were for a pure and simple reversion, as casting the most severe reflection upon them. No one had the least hesitation in pronouncing the sentence null in its very essence. It is in his majesty's court of requests that the suit is to be gone over anew, and the memory of the unfortunate Calas justified. His widow is become an object of public attention and commiseration, from her misfortunes, her virtues, and her courage. She has received many testimonies of benevolence and sympathy from the most respectable part of the community; but she is more particularly indebted to the active zeal of M. de Voltaire, and to the assistance given by him in every possible way, for the tardy justice she has obtained.

The tragedy of Cromwell is one of the coldest and worst productions that has appeared for a long time. I shall not stop to point out all the faults of this unformed drama; but shall content myself with observing, that it totally fails in the only things which could excuse the impertinence of the fable, that is to say, strength and fire. The

author knows so little of the construction of a drama, that we are always left to guess what he means to say and do, and there is not, properly speaking, either any unfolding of the plot, any connection in carrying it on, or any proper denouement; and yet nothing would have been more easy than to build, with the materials he has chosen, absurd as they are, a complete tragedy according to all the established rules. This piece may be performed as far as five times, for the public are always very indulgent to first attempts. An author is permitted to give the public a very *ennuyeux* piece once, but he cannot be allowed to return a second time to the charge. The author of Cromwell, M. Duclairon, is a man of no talents; he has the art of writing in a style vapid beyond conception. It may well be said that Elijah Morand has thrown his mantle entire over Elisha Duclairon.

There is not a character in this piece that is not essentially bad; that of Sophy is detestable. The poet has endeavoured to preserve in Cromwell the enthusiasm and hypocrisy which formed in fact the leading features of his character; but he forgot to give to his entire picture that strain of fanaticism which characterized the age. Thus what might have been fine becomes flat. Cromwell was only an enthusiast and a hypocrite because he was connected with fanatics, and lived in a gloomy and melancholy period; nobody was exempt

from that twist in the head which attached itself to some sect or other, more or less rigid, more or less absurd, according to the degree of density in the vapours in which the brain was enveloped. Philosophy alone, generally speaking, disperses these dark vapours. It is not that the number of really sound minds is greater in one age than in another, but when that of reason takes its turn, absurd people lose their credit in the world. They have their party undoubtedly, but it is a party that will not shed a drop of blood in the cause, and quarrels, which among persons differently organized would be bloody and terrible, are no longer any thing but ridiculous. In the tragedy of Cromwell every character ought to be a sectarian in some way, whether presbyterian, puritan, anglican, leveller, or independent, and should talk the jargon of his sect. If Cromwell put himself at the head of the latter class, it was because he found them the most proper for the accomplishment of his designs, and because in a factious and barbarous age the greatest men, as well as men of the best regulated minds, adhere to some one of the epidemic phrensies that trouble and agitate the world at that moment. I am persuaded that Mahomet was very far from being convinced that he was not a great prophet, and a man sent by God.

What I have heard respecting the particular character of William Pitt, whose name has been sounded so much in the public ears during the last

ten years, and whose ministry forms the most brilliant epoch in the British annals—what I have heard, I say, respecting him, leads me to think that people accustomed to judging characters accurately, would draw a very ingenious parallel between him and Oliver Cromwell. Although the public characters and reputation of these two extraordinary men are not in the least similar to each other, I think there are many points in which they may be brought into comparison. In the age of Cromwell, Pitt would have been a general and an enthusiast, perhaps an usurper; in the age of Pitt, Cromwell would have been at the head of the ministry, would have been a citizen and a patriot. The genius of the age and the concurrence of circumstances disposes of every thing, and gives to the same cast of character forms varied to infinity.

The late Crebillon had attempted to bring Cromwell upon the stage, but relinquished his design after having read the first act of his tragedy at the French academy, and nobody I think will consider this as a loss to be regretted. Such subjects can never suit the French stage till the high tone at present established in it is altered; till pompous declamation shall be banished, and strength of manners, with a natural mode of speaking shall be substituted. The man who would bring Cromwell upon the stage with effect, must know how to make him speak as Sophocles

makes Philoctetes. To sum up all, it must be owned that such subjects are too grave and too serious for a people who only go to the theatre to amuse themselves.

The Natural History of Messrs. de Buffon and Daubenton will ever be considered as one of those works which has contributed the most to establish the glory of France in a literary point of view. If M. de Buffon's part be the most brilliant, and received with more eagerness than M. Daubenton's by those who only aim at acquiring general notions, it must be acknowledged that the labours of the latter will be much more valuable to posterity. If any great progress ever be made in the science of natural history, it must be by such kind of labours constantly and assiduously pursued from age to age; if Aristotle or Pliny had been assisted by a Daubenton, it is easy to see that we should have been relieved from many of our present uncertainties, and much of our present obscurity,—that natural history would be much farther advanced.

The study of nature is one of those best suited to a very early age, and it would be well if it were made a principal subject in our plan of education. Instead of making our young men lose a great deal of very precious time in Gothic exercises, which are comprehended in our colleges under the names of rhetoric and philosophy, and which only serve to pervert the mind, would it not

be far more desirable to furnish their heads with many branches of knowledge that would be useful to them for the whole of their lives? The study of natural history with that of the mechanical arts, a study not less useful, would render the early part of education less sedentary, and more conformable with the inclinations and dispositions of childhood, which wants to be constantly in action. The master would walk about with his pupils from field to field, from forest to forest, from manufactory to manufactory, which would be far more salutary for their bodily health, as well as more instructive to their minds than shutting them up in vast prisons, occupied in composing a theme or disputing upon a thesis, with other labours of the like kind, no less hurtful than insipid. These studies would particularly suit the curiosity of a very early age. The ardour for instruction is greatest in infancy, and the memory, fresh and alive to every thing would more easily retain a nomenclature real and useful, than that jargon of scholastic, metaphysical, and theological terms, which only confound their minds and give them no distinct ideas.

As public education, in immense states such as ours, can only be vague and indeterminate, the study of nature and of the mechanical arts would have the farther advantage of being useful in every condition of life. Into whatever situation a young man may enter, when the time of infancy is past, it will always be a disadvantage to him to know

nothing concerning natural productions, to be ignorant of the manner in which the cloth and the linen that he wears are manufactured. In short, among the very decided advantages that these studies would have over those with which our youth are now occupied, a most important one would be, that the mind, accustomed from the very first steps it takes to think with justness, and not to be satisfied with mere words, would understand the bounds and the poverty of our knowledge, and feel how difficult it is to escape from error;—would learn the great art of doubting, of distrusting its own lights, of being modest and discreet. These are qualities without which it is impossible ever to attain real soundness of judgment; and it is true science alone that can give them to a youth naturally presumptuous and self-sufficient.

Nothing in effect seems more proper to correct our pride than the present state of natural history. In spite of the efforts of so many ages, the labours of so many excellent heads, one cannot take a step in it without encountering difficulties and uncertainties. We are every where deficient in facts; philosophers have every where substituted their false systems. It even appears as if nature would remain eternally impenetrable to us, would always refuse herself to our audacious and feeble researches. The study of nature will then be to us less the means of carrying the science to

perfection, than of enforcing upon us a conviction of the feebleness of our organs, of the limited nature of our faculties, and the vanity of our labours.

Two things seem adverse to our ever carrying this science to perfection, the shortness of life, and the insurmountable barriers that nature has raised between the different species of animals. I do not here speak merely of wild and carnivorous animals, whom their instinct leads to shun mankind, and who can never be domesticated. But even those who have been reduced by man to servitude, and made to administer to his wants and his pleasures, from the very remotest antiquity, are not the less placed out of the reach of our curiosity and instruction. We certainly know somewhat more of the cat and the dog than of the lion and the panther: but how many important questions, essential towards elucidating completely the nature of these animals, remain still unknown to us. We shall never have precise and clear ideas relative to their organization and perceptions, to their manner of receiving and communicating their ideas, unless some Buffon should rise up among them, as among us, and write, in a manner intelligible to us, the natural history of their species. Into what strange blunders would these Buffon dogs or cats fall: the cat, for example, would give a much more pompous description of the Chartreux convent in the street of hell, than

of the palace of Versailles; St. Bruno would be to him a much greater man than Louis XIV, because he procured to cats the means of living at their ease, and being well-fed all the year, though only *en maigre*, while at Versailles they find nothing but meat and tumult. The historiographer of wolves and birds of prey would not fail to chronicle in his records the year 1757, as one of the happiest ever known. Nine battles fought in less than eight months!—what an abundance of game! but, he would add, the happiness of the world has ever since been diminishing; and about the year 1763 a general and most afflicting dearth succeeded to this vast abundance. In the midst of these fine reasonings, which resemble but too much those of many of our philosophers, we should be much surprised to learn truths respecting the nature, the character, and the manners of these species, of which we never had the least suspicion, although they have lived on a footing of familiarity with us for five or six thousand years.

It is evident that the history of nature must appear in a very different point of view to different species, and that every one reads in this great book with the eyes peculiar to himself, that is to say, according to the organs and faculties with which he is endowed. All external objects are modified by our organs, the weakness and limited nature of which place us at every moment in the case of an

invincible ignorance, and prevent our attaching more than a certain degree of evidence even to things that we conceive we know the best. The almost imperceptible fly, that wanders over the forehead of the professor of natural history as over an immense continent, bordered on one side with vast forests, and on the other with dreadful gulphs and precipices,—this fly, I say, who pursues his travels while the professor is gravely explaining the science of nature to his pupils, if he could become a pupil for a moment, would be much astonished to learn that the vast continent he had been exploring, which he had found so solitary and so abounding with objects of awe and terror, was only half the face of an animal called man, who makes so much noise and bustle in the world, without flies having the least suspicion of such a thing, and a single one of whose fingers touching his forehead at random, might prove as fatal to the traveller fly, as the fall of a mountain to the traveller man.

It is an established fact, that man has not in this respect any superiority over the most insignificant of beings. We are equally surrounded by error, with this difference, that the fly probably does not waste the moment of existence in erecting systems, and reasoning upon things of which it is impossible he should ever attain any knowledge, while all the astonishing efforts of the genius of man have taught him nothing but to know

his own weakness, by involving him in doubts, difficulties, and uncertainties which are wholly inexplicable.

The shortness of our lives appears to oppose insurmountable obstacles to our ever making any great progress in the science in question. Even by combining our labours, by uniting them for one common end, we can never flatter ourselves with collecting facts enough to establish the general principles and constant laws of nature. All our knowledge consists in generalizing our ideas, in imagining relations which perhaps have no existence except in our own heads, and which, though they may do honour to our imagination or our sagacity, are not the less wholly chimerical; to form, in short, after some particular facts, inductions upon which we establish, as eternal and invariable, laws that nature never owned. Thus the source of our errors is in ourselves, and it is consequently inexhaustible. If the invention of some useful arts appear to have given us manifest advantages, as far as they are concerned, over the ancients; if the facility of travelling in our days facilitate to us the means of gaining information, if the establishment of posts render the communication of our discoveries ready and easy; if printing and the art of representing objects by engraving appear to fix the laws of science, by multiplying instruction and the means of conveying the knowledge we have acquired from one and

of the globe to the other; still we are too continually subject to physical and moral revolutions to draw durable advantage from this ready circulation. A moment of calamity, a conflagration, a tempest, an earthquake, a man ambitious, powerful and absurd, a much greater scourge than any of the others, suffices to annihilate the fruits of twenty ages of genius and exertion.

Naturalists have furnished us with fine methods, fine systems; they know how to class beings with as much order and exactness as our intendants employ in classing sailors in the maritime provinces; but nature despises and laughs at our methods. There are philosophers bold enough to assure us, that not a single species has been lost in the animal creation for five or six thousand years, the period that we assume our globe to have endured, and that not a single new species has arisen. To decide this one point alone it would have required to be immortal, and to have filled the whole universe at once. The brevity and the rapidity of our existence ought to recal incessantly to our minds this beautiful idea of Fontenelle's: "Never in the memory of a rose "was a gardener known to die." It is evident that to roses a gardener must be an immortal being. How absurd, how ridiculous would a rose appear to us, that should pretend to explain to her sisters the eternal laws of nature.

The two new volumes published by Messieurs

de Buffon and Daubenton, the tenth and eleventh of their work, are a sufficient illustration of these ideas. The tenth contains the description of a great number of animals of the north of Europe, of Africa, and of America, the names of some of which are hardly even known to us. All the ideas of our naturalists are taken from the dissection of some solitary specimens of the species; an operation useful without doubt, but which throws no light whatever upon the instincts and habits of the animals. The history which M. de Buffon has given of them only consists of a tedious refutation of the errors into which other naturalists have fallen, without however his being able himself to substitute any notions more certain; facts are every where wanting, they are very ill compensated by conjectures and inductions.

The eleventh volume is more interesting. It treats of the elephant, the rhinoceros, the camel, the dromedary, the buffalo, the wild ox, the zebra, various kinds of sheep, the stag of the Ganges, and several other animals. The histories of the elephant and the camel are the most to be distinguished; but in all the articles we admire the philosophical view of the subject taken by M. de Buffon: his noble, elevated, majestic style, which enchants, and as it were aggrandizes the reader. I shall confine myself to noticing some remarks rather belonging to the side of taste than of genius.

In treating of the respect paid to elephants in the Indian courts, M. de Buffon observes that the reigning emperor is the only person to whom these animals bend the knee, and that this salutation is returned by the monarch. "However," the historian adds, "the attentions, the respect, "the offerings, they receive, flatter without cor- "rupting them; they cannot then have a human "soul; this circumstance ought to demonstrate "that truth sufficiently to the Indians."—This is a curious argument, more ingenious and poetical than philosophical. It is reasoning after the manner of Juvenal, and would be excellent in a satire, but seems rather misplaced in a serious work. In speaking of the art with which the Hottentots train the wild bull: "Thus," says he, "it appears "that the most stupid of men are the best pre- "ceptors to animals. Why has the enlightened "man, far from being able to lead others, so "much difficulty to conduct himself?"—There is not a child in the world who could not answer this question.

M. de Buffon has presented us with some new and original ideas in treating of the animals in the New World. He says there are no animals found in America which could not have passed thither by the north from the Old World. All those whose constitutions would not permit of their living in a high northern latitude are not to be found there, because there was no passage practi-

cable to them. This conjecture is fine and perfectly philosophical, but we must take care not to assign to it a greater degree of certainty than is its due, on account of the dearth of facts and observations. One thing cannot be passed over. M. de Buffon says that there were no oxen originally in South America, that the quantities now found there are the descendants of those which have been carried over from Europe since America was discovered, and are of the breed without the bunch upon the back. North America, on the contrary, at its discovery abounded with the bison, or ox with the bunch, which, says M. de Buffon, had passed thither from the north of Europe. Yet, at the same time, he assures us, that the bison is an animal of the southern parts of the old continent, while the ox without the bunch inhabits the northern parts. According to these observations it ought to be the latter animal that is found in North America.

Let us conclude with an important fact, of which doubtless M. de Buffon is ignorant, since he does not notice it;—I have it from the Abbé de Galiani, who has established the fact by his own observation. It is that the rhinoceros has two distinct tongues, placed one over the other in such a manner that the under one is like the tongue of other animals, and the upper one comes over it about half way from the root. To understand the nature of this mechanism it must be recollected

that the rhinoceros having a very short and stiff neck would not be able to take its subsistence without a very long snout, at the end of which the upper lip advancing very much beyond the lower serves him, like the elephant's trunk, to gather up his nourishment, and convey it to the first tongue, and this conveys it to the second, which assists in the swallowing of it. Our tongues follow a similar kind of mechanism; they rise like a bridge in the middle, and it is this bridge which carries the food after mastication to the orifice of the throat. Probably the first tongue of the rhinoceros would, from its great length, want sufficient spring for this purpose, and a second tongue was therefore necessary to receive the food and convey it to the throat. A fine subject of dissertation for the sectaries of final causes.

M. Algarotti is just dead in Italy. This man is celebrated throughout Europe for his connections with Frederic the Great, King of Prussia, and for the stay that he made with him. He has written, in his own language, a *Newtonianism for ladies*, or Conversations, in which he explains Newton's system, after the manner that Fontenelle in his *Worlds* explains that of Descartes. A very fine stroke, in his exit out of the world, is that he has left in his will a remembrance to the King of Prussia, and one to William Pitt. This is a mode of publicly announcing that he was honoured with

the friendship of these two great men, and there appears to me, notwithstanding all that is said by pedants, more vanity in it than in his epitaph. He ordered that the following inscription should be inscribed on his tomb: *Hic jacet Algarottus, sed non omnis.* This epitaph may be called pious and devout, but the vanity of it I cannot see. It appears, besides, only the parody of one upon some other celebrated Italian, whose name I cannot recollect. *Hic jacet ..... totus.*—The Abbé Galiani asserts that M. Algarotti's epitaph belongs properly to Farinelli, or Caffarelli, or Salimbeni, and would be better restored to the right owner.

August 1764.

It were much to be wished that the *bons-mots* and characteristic anecdotes of Benedict the Fourteenth should be collected in a *Lambertiniana;* he had certainly the strongest claim to infallibility of all the successors of St. Peter, for he had more talents and understanding, we might almost say, than all his predecessors together. This great and amiable Pontiff seeing the French ambassador, the Cardinal de Rochechouart, come to him with a long and sorrowful countenance: "What is the "matter with my lord the ambassador?" said he. —"I have just received the melancholy news," answered the other with a sigh, "that the arch- "bishop of Paris is exiled anew."—"And always "on account of this bull?" inquired the Pope.

—" Alas! yes, Holy Father."—" That recals to " my mind," replied the Pontiff, " an adventure " which happened to me at the time of my lega- " tion to Bologna. Two senators had a great " quarrel whether the pre-eminence was to be " given to the works of Tasso or of Ariosto. " The matter came to a duel, and the adherent " of Ariosto received a mortal wound. I went " to see him in his last moments, when he said: " ' Is it possible that a man should perish in the " ' vigour of his age in defence of Ariosto, whom " ' he never even read?—Nay, if I had read him, " ' I should never have understood him, seeing " ' that I am but a very stupid fellow.' " When one reads such things, one is very much tempted, heretic as one is, to cry out *Sancte benedicte, ora pro nobis!* never may the signet of the fisherman be consigned to any but one who resembles thee. The Count de Bissy talking to us one day of this Pontiff, of the good Mahmoud, and of the reigning Grand Signor of the Mussulmans, said: " They are so good that if they were to change " places, the Pope to be made Grand Signor, and " the Grand Signor, Pope; I do not think any " one would be sensible of the change."

This contest for the superiority between Tasso and Ariosto, has subsisted for some centuries in Italy, and it is to be hoped, for the amusement of the idle, that it will still subsist many more. All persons of taste are divided upon the question,

and fools take a part in it for one side or the other without knowing any reason why. All things considered, however, this is better than disputing upon efficacious grace and other questions no less equivocal and unintelligible. The argument which has always appeared to me the strongest in favour of Tasso is, that he is the poet of the people. The gondoliers of Venice, the peasants of Tuscany, do not sing the octaves of Ariosto, but those of Tasso;—they know the latter poet almost by heart. But if this argument be conclusive, it follows, that the couplets of Lubin and Annette are superior to the finest sonatas of Lolli;* for the first are sung in the theatres, in the streets, in the manufactories, in the shops; and while a small number of connoisseurs are in extasies at the divine strains of Lolli, the multitude is wholly insensible to them. The same may be said to be the fate of Ariosto in Italy: he has undoubtedly as far as numbers are concerned, much fewer partisans than Tasso; but his partisans are more eager, more enthusiastic, more intoxicated, with their admiration than the others. He is the elect of those refined minds which are transported almost beyond themselves by a fine verse, by a stroke of genius and fancy, who are more violently and deeply affected in an instant by his flights, than they could be in a year by the noble, well-sustained, though somewhat cold beauty of Tasso. It will

* Lolli was a famous violin-player at Paris at this period.

remain, then, always a point for determination, which is to be considered as the most decisive criterion of excellence, the voice of numbers, or, if I may be allowed the expression, the voices of a few gourmands in literature, who prefer what is exquisite and rare, the charm of which the great mass of the world are incapable of tasting, to a beauty of a more ordinary stamp, and more generally felt.

This dispute one day occupied, at Rome, the beaux-esprits, who were accustomed to meet every week at the house of Signor Forteguerri. This prelate, who is celebrated all over Italy, for the extent of his genius and knowledge, declared for Tasso. He asserted, that it was not difficult to write after the manner of Ariosto, where every possible licence was allowed; and, to prove what he advanced, he engaged to write himself, a poem in the taste of Orlando Furioso, a specimen of which should be laid before them at their next meeting. He was as good as his word; and the next week produced the first ten cantos of *Ricciardetto*, the remainder of which was finished with a rapidity equally astonishing. This poem had at the moment a prodigious run, nor has its reputation diminished since that time. We find in it nearly the same personages whom Ariosto has rendered so celebrated; but, above all, we find the same genius and imagination that have immortalized the productions of this truly great poet.

It may well be said, that *Ricciardetto* has done more injury to Ariosto than Tasso will ever do, because it has shared his laurels, instead of which Tasso enjoys a glory of a very different kind. It must also be allowed, that Signor Forteguerri supported a bad cause, perhaps in a triumphant manner; that *Ricciardetto* does not prove that it is easy to write a poem in the taste of Orlando Furioso, it only proves that its author was a man of very great genius, and uncommon fertility of invention, considering the short time in which the poem was completed. This prelate has left, among other very choice productions, *Sermones* in Latin verse, after the manner of those of Horace; but these his family have not yet thought proper to publish, on account of the many strokes spread over them, at some of the most illustrious personages in Italy. It is a work which will delight our descendants, when a new generation having arisen, no one will be affected by these strokes.

The ashes of great men are not always respected. A miserable rhymester, who has not chosen to favour us with his name, has just published a free imitation of *Ricciardetto* in French verse. Only half is as yet given to the world, but the author promises the remainder in case of the present being well received. In this case we may be assured, that we shall never have it; for nobody has been able to get through an imitation so barbarous and so flat. The poet merits eulogium

upon one ground only, that he has not deceived us for a moment as to his talents; his deficiency is manifested in the very first stanza. It were much to be wished, for the benefit of those who cannot read *Ricciardetto* in the original, that a translation in prose should be made, which would give us some idea of this charming poem. An attempt to translate it into French verse, in a way that would give any idea of the original, is wholly wild and futile; and a simple imitation does not merit the least attention, since it cannot give any idea of the genius, taste, beauties, and defects of the original work.

Disputes of the kind we have been noticing upon the preference of one author over another, are commonly marks of the frivolity of the public mind; they resemble those embranglements of etiquette which arise at public festivities, where every one contends for precedence. A dispute has long been carried on in France on the comparative merits of the ancients and moderns;—it is only twelve years since the arrival of two miserable *buffa* performers from Italy, set all Paris together by the ears, on the preference of Italian over French music. The dispute whether Corneille or Racine was to be considered as the greatest genius, is very similar to that between Tasso and Ariosto. We know by Madame de Sévigné's letters, and other monuments of the kind, with what contempt the partisans of Corneille spoke of Racine, and they were then very numerous. But

the more a nation cultivates letters, the more refined does the taste become; the elegance and harmony which at first were scarcely felt, soon become qualities wholly inestimable; this is the reason why the partisans of Corneille are constantly diminishing in numbers, and those of Racine constantly increasing. But the dispute at bottom is a very frivolous one; because Cæsar is a great man, is it necessary to condemn Pompey as a pitiful fellow?

We have heard enough of the ills of war; philosophers, poets, hearts of tenderness and sensibility have emulated each other in drawing the most frightful pictures of them. But has not peace its ills as well as war? and is not war as necessary, in the moral world, to give a new force to the springs of the machine, growing rusty by too much repose, as tempests are in the natural, to purify and give a new elasticity to the air? I think that a perfectly novel and interesting work might be written upon the evils of peace. The repose and idleness which it brings with it, taken in a general point of view, enervate men's minds and deprive them of their vigour; every thing is weakened, every thing slumbers; men occupy themselves only with trifles, with things futile and frivolous. Thence the multiplicity of academies, the taste for idle disputes, and empty prattle. The military spirit is lost amid protracted repose, and we are not authorised to say that this is no evil,

even though a nation ceases to have any call to defend itself. We ought not to consider this spirit as useful only to those who fight for the state, it spreads itself over every class among a warlike people; it has an influence even upon those arts which are called by distinction the arts of peace. Poetry, painting, music, all require a portion of this spirit, all receive from it that character of vigour, which is alone capable of rendering the productions of any age worthy the admiration of succeeding ones;—peace, generally speaking, produces nothing but dissertations, sonnets, madrigals, or such like flat and vapid effusions.

If we would form a just idea of the estimation in which the Italians ought to be held, we must consider them as producing so many *chefs d'œuvre* in various ways after the military spirit was entirely lost,—as pursuing them in the midst of so many divided states, when Italy had been for a very long time the theatre of the disputes carried on among other powers, without the Italians themselves taking any direct part in them. The genius of the country has long resisted the effects of idleness; but in time, nothing will probably be left in Italy except Arcadian poets, sonnetteers, and cicisbei, since no other professions remain to the greater part of the nobility and gentry, but the long robe or the priesthood. Happily for the arts, there is little reason to fear that this disease will become a general *mal du pays* in Europe; sove-

reigns will always find subjects of war amply sufficient to preserve to mankind the military spirit, with all its advantages.

September, 1764.

The Abbé and the Rabbi, by the Baron d'Holbach.

A Venetian Abbé disputing with a Rabbi of Ferrara, endeavoured to prove to him the truth of the Christian religion, and the certainty of the Messiah having appeared in the person of Jesus Christ. He founded his arguments, as usual, upon the accomplishment of the prophecies, and dwelt particularly upon those which foretold the dispersion of the Jews, and the misfortunes that have befallen that nation. To this the Rabbi answered, in the first place, that the Messiah foretold in the Scriptures was neither a god, nor a deliverer, nor a monarch, as had been vulgarly believed, but that it was a fortunate period which had arrived, and which the Hebrews had now enjoyed for a great many centuries. He went so far as to prove to the Abbé that the Jews were beyond all comparison happier than the Christians, or any other people existing on the globe, and it was upon the following grounds that he rested the support of his paradox.

"*First:* By your own confession, said he, we worship the true God, but it costs us nothing at present to support this worship. We have neither temples, altars, nor sacrifices; we have neither

pope, bishops, nor priests, who must be paid enormously; we are not obliged to pension a tribe of lazy monks, who devour the substance of the nation, without being of any use to it.

"*Secondly:* The Eternal does not require us to do any ill. The Jews are not obliged to condemn themselves to a voluntary celibacy; the daughters of Sion do not think that the Deity will be pleased with seeing them groan in perpetual imprisonment, where they live wretched and die useless. They think it no reproach to give descendants to Abraham, and to multiply his race as the stars of heaven.

"*Thirdly:* We have no monarch to maintain, no courtiers to fatten upon us, no troops to pay and feed, no country to defend; we are only the subjects of your princes as much and for as long a time as suits us. As soon as we are tired of one country, or find any thing disagreeable in it, we remove to another, and by the assistance of bills of exchange, of which we are the inventors, carry our fortune away with us. Deprived of the right of acquiring actual property, we are, thanks to God, strangers in every country in the earth.

"*Fourthly:* Descended all alike from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the miserable distinctions of nobleman and commoner are unknown among us; the birth of every Jew is illustrious, and we do not despise any of our brethren.

" *Fifthly:* If other nations despise us, we return them more than an equal share of contempt. No man among us is a slave, like the negroes, or a serf, like the Christians; we are not condemned to labour in the mines or at the public works; we cannot be compelled to serve as soldiers or sailors, we can never be drawn for the militia. Christians fight among each other only to render our trade the more flourishing.

" *Sixthly:* The rewards that are promised us by the God of Abraham are purely temporal, and we have been in the enjoyment of them for a long time. We were taught to expect that we were to possess the fat of the land: that fat is money, and we enjoy it largely; we have the benefit, while the cost is to others. Have we not in our hands a great part of the riches of the world?—We were promised that we should lend on usury, and are we not the greatest usurers upon the earth?—We were promised also that others should not exercise usury towards us, and is there a Christian in the world who can boast of having lent money on usury to a Jew?

" *Seventhly:* We are accused of tricking, and of a want of good faith towards strangers, towards those who are not of our own nation;—but are not these strangers our enemies?—We are mild, humane, compassionate towards our brethren;—we observe the most rigid justice among ourselves; we are scrupulously faithful to our engagements,

Our God dispenses with our practising these duties towards others; and you will allow that we are not very greatly their debtors for any good they do to us.

" *Eighthly:* We never meddle with the wives of Christians, and of all modern nations we are the least infected with the scourge which the pious Spaniards brought from the other side of the globe. If any accident of this kind happen to us, it is only to some Portuguese Jew who has transgressed the law, by paying his homage to the daughter of one of the uncircumcised.

" Weigh," said the Rabbi, " these advantages, and then determine whether the Jews are as miserable and as contemptible a race as you would represent them. Can you doubt but that our nation is at this moment far more numerous than when we were confined within the arid precincts of Judea? Do not you believe that we are richer than we were under David and Solomon? By our dispersion the whole universe has become our inheritance. Do we not gather where others have sowed? Do not the Christians go from one end of the world to the other, to amass riches and cast them up again for us?"

The Abbé remained wholly dumb-founded. He was obliged to concede that the Hebrews, notwithstanding they are objects of the scorn and reprobation of all other nations, are by no means the least favoured people among mankind.

Within these few days we have had performed at the French theatre a little episodic piece in one act, and in prose, entitled *The Circle, or an Evening à-la-mode.* It is a tolerably accurate picture of the idleness, the frivolity, the ennui that reigns in the fashionable world, and in most of the circles at Paris. The piece has met with great success. It is not a comedy; there is no regular plot or intrigue in it; its merit consists in being a correct copy of the scenes it is intended to exhibit, and it is written with great spirit and vivacity. It would have been easy for the author to omit some parts which were found rather dragging at the first representation, without injuring any of the characteristic features with which it abounds.

Among these features one is particularly applauded. A physician, after a very long and frivolous visit, in which he has been prating a parcel of nothings, says at last: "Ladies, I must make "my apologies, I really have not a moment to "myself; I have so many patients on my hands "at this time, that it absolutely grieves me for "my poor horses."—Another stroke which pleases me still more is, when the Baron talks to Araminta of the delicious satisfaction he finds at his country seat, in comforting the poor labourer, in paying a part of the taxes for him: "These "people," said he, "do not merely praise, they "bless me." The dialogue in *The Circle* turns upon all the passing events of the times, which

always pleases and amuses for the moment. Every thing is brought in excepting inoculation, and the remonstrances of the parliament; these were subjects too delicate to be touched upon. The strokes at the comic opera are particularly happy. The passion of the public for these pieces since the suppression of the Vaudevilles, which were equally licentious and displaced, has given offence to many pedants. The author of *The Circle* has found the means of paying his court to the latter, without giving offence to the partisans of the comic opera.

The name of the author, M. Poinsinet, has besides contributed not a little towards the success of the piece. So little was expected of it, that the house was nearly empty at the first representation; the few that did see it were the more astonished in proportion to the very little expectation formed of it. M. Poinsinet has hitherto been considered but as a sort of simpleton. About five or six years ago, a cousin of his, and another person, amused themselves with making him believe that the King of Prussia had resolved to confide to him the education of the Prince of Prussia, if he would change his religion. He, in consequence, made a solemn abjuration of the Catholic religion before a pretended Protestant divine, who had been sent clandestinely, as he was informed, by the Prussian monarch, to deprive France of one of its greatest ornaments! This comedy was carried on for several months, and consisted of

several acts, without M. Poinsinet's suspecting for a moment the truth of the facts. This the persons who played the trick called *mystifying* * a man, and the poor dupe was honoured with the nickname of *The Mystified*; there are epithets which, however, would perhaps have been more properly applied to such a transaction than *mystifying*, and there are nicknames which those who could be capable of duping a man so egregiously, deserved much more, than their dupe deserved that given to him.

To return to M. Poinsinet's comedy. Supposing, according to the wishes of the author, it should descend to posterity, much speculation will probably be excited whether the manners here painted ever were in reality those of a great and illustrious nation; whether the women of fashion in general lived in that state of total idleness, with the exception of what occupation they found in intrigues and gallantry, in that absence of all sentiment, that Araminta, Cidalisa and Ismena are here represented to live;—whether the youth distinguished by their birth, or by the other advantages of fortune, resembled in their indolence, their ignorance, and degradation, the frivolous young Marquis, the starched and pedantic Lisidor, or the *petit-maître* Abbé of M. Poinsinet. It is to be hoped that the speculators of those days will

* A word which has much the same meaning as the English *hoax*.

be enabled to discover that though manners like these did once actually exist, they were those of a generation as short as it was frivolous, the follies of which were atoned by succeeding ages of superior talents, virtue, and activity. For if such manners are to endure for several successive generations, history, in recording them, will, no doubt, alas! have to inform the curious of after ages, that their duration had at length the most fatal influence upon the honour and the glory of the nation.

It is said that Pascal Paoli, the chief of the Corsicans, has applied to Jean Jacques Rousseau to form a code of laws for his nation. Such a step is highly flattering to the citizen of Geneva, and if it should happen not to produce to the Corsicans laws that they approve, will procure us from the framer of them a work perfectly novel and full of zest. It is said that other Corsicans have made applications of a similar nature to other persons. They cannot do better than collect the opinions of the most enlightened men in Europe, compare them, and choose the best. What a grand task has Paoli here proposed to the philosophers; the question is not now of forming fine turned periods, they are called upon to display the powers of a Solon or a Lycurgus, on an occasion single in its kind. To legislate for a people full of genius, of vivacity, of valour, and of other great qualities, such as the Corsicans, is undoubtedly to engage in

one of the grandest undertakings of the age. In this project they will have the wishes of all Europe in their favour; there is not a man of honour who does not interest himself in the fate of these brave people, and against the detestable oppressions of the Genoese government.

December, 1764.

It is confidently asserted that there is in existence a volume of *Letters from the Mountains*, by Jean Jacques Rousseau, but it is not known either at Paris or Geneva. In the mean time, a bookseller here has made a compilation of five or six letters of the citizen's, all of which have been long known; as the letter by which he renounces his right of citizenship at Geneva; that which he wrote in the beginning of this year, to disavow the answer which a Jansenist made under his name to the charge of the Archbishop of Auch, with some others. The principal of these letters is that which he addressed to M. de Voltaire, eight years ago, on occasion of the Lisbon earthquake, wherein he defends the principles of optimism against the poem written by M. de Voltaire on that subject.

These two celebrated men seem to me to have revived, in their persons, the characters of Heraclitus and Democritus; so much do men resemble each other in all ages and all climes; the one always groans and weeps, the other laughs and

turns every thing into a joke. If M. Rousseau had been at war with M. de Pompignan, and a relation of the latter, an officer in his Majesty's service, had written him a threatening letter, he would have cried out murder! assassination!—the military profession, human nature in general, would have been loaded with reproaches. M. de Voltaire receives such a letter, he laughs at it, and writes to the Duke de Choiseul: "May I not say, "my lord duke, with truth, that I am most cruelly "used by this family?—it is not enough that one "has been flaying my ears all his life with his "miserable verses, but the other wants now "fairly to cut them off."

Young men and women are fond of novels which represent love as unfortunate, and which make them shed tears. *The Memoirs of the Count de Comminges* are of a very weeping nature. They exhibit a young man, accomplished, and favoured with all the gifts of nature and fortune, led on, from misfortune to misfortune, by a passion which every thing justifies, except the enmity of his father towards the family of the object by whom he is captivated. Despair conducts the Count at last to the monastery of La Trappe, where he takes the vow, and buries himself alive, because he supposes his Adelaïde dead. What a situation is he in, when, after passing some years in the most austere penitence, he is

called, according to the established custom, to assist at the death of one of the monks of this celebrated and mournful convent, and recognizes, in the supposed dying man, his Adelaïde, the object of so many tears, of such long and vain regrets. If this situation be not probable, it is extremely affecting; and the novel of the *Count de Comminges* has always maintained a high reputation. It was written by the late Madame de Tençin, sister to the Cardinal of that name, a woman celebrated in more ways than for her literary talents alone.

The poet Roy, of whom I believed France to have been disencumbered a year ago, is only just dead. For ten years he had been in a state of imbecility, and given up to devotion, after having been all the former part of his life base and malignant: these things arrange themselves very well together. He never considered his malignities as any reproach to him: but he reproached himself severely with having written some operas, the voluptuousness of which was very inconsistent with true Christian morality; and when his confessor, in order to tranquillize his mind upon the subject, assured him that all was forgotten, the penitent exclaimed with great compunction, "O no! they are too fine ever to be forgotten!" —He might have died tranquilly long ago, if he

had had no heavier sins wherewith to reproach himself.

A much more grievous loss than that of the poet above-mentioned, a real and deplorable loss to the country, is the Marquis de Montmirail, nephew to Marshal d'Etrées, a young man of the greatest hopes, who has been carried off in the flower of his age by a malignant fever. He was a member of the Academy of Sciences, and colonel of a regiment of cavalry; he had served with distinction in the army, and cultivated letters with the greatest success. A fine countenance, manners most pleasing and conciliating, a solid understanding, a thousand virtues, and a thousand amiable qualities, increased by the utmost modesty, rendered him dear to all who knew him. What a loss, at a moment when, among the youth of distinction, so few are to be found even of moderate hopes. M. de Montmirail did not go much into society; he had better means of employing every moment of his life, and was a perfect stranger to that idleness which renders time so dead a weight upon the hands of most of our young men. I saw him with the army in 1757, often enough to have been able duly to appreciate what was his real value. As he was ardent in search of instruction, we often, at every movement of the army, met with pleasure in the same

places, to question the people of the country, without either knowing who the other was. He seemed at home every where, in the army, at the academy, at the court, in the world. The philosopher, Diderot, compared him, as a courtier, to a swan obliged to plunge into a heap of mud. "He is," said he, "so well oiled over with probity and "honesty, that he comes out as white as he went "in, without having suffered the least vice or the "least foible to obtain any empire over him."

Among other translations with which we have recently been favoured, is one of the *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, a work by Mr. Adam Smith, Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Glasgow, 2 vols. 8vo. The translator, or the bookseller, in order to give it a more attractive title, has *wisely* called it *Metaphysics of the Soul.* This work has a high reputation in England, but has met with no success at Paris; this is not, however, any proof of its want of merit. Next to poetry, nothing is so difficult to translate as metaphysical works; perhaps it is even easier to transfer into another language the images of the poet, than the precise ideas of the metaphysician. To succeed in the latter task it would be necessary to find always, in the two languages, terms which correspond exactly the one with the other; to explain, in an equal number of French words, the idea that the original author has expressed in so many Eng-

lish ones. Now, each people arranges its abstract and scientific ideas after its own peculiar manner, and assigns to them, after its own fancy, words, exact equivalents to which it is almost impossible to find in another language. For one expression, where this conformity between the two languages is to be found, there will be a hundred where it does not exist; and, take from a metaphysical work its precision, there remains nothing but a vague and obscure jargon. Such is that of the translator of the *Theory of Moral Sentiments*.

We have lately received some copies of the *Letters from the Mountains*, by Jean Jacques Rousseau. This extraordinary production is intended as an answer to *Letters written from the Country*, a work which M. Tronchin, attorney-general to the republic of Geneva, published, about fifteen months ago, not as a magistrate, but as a private man, to prove that all the council had done in condemning *Emilius*, was strictly conformable with the laws. This work, of a wise and enlightened citizen, disconcerted, at the time, the manœuvres of some turbulent spirits. Jean Jacques was treated in it with the greatest mildness and forbearance; but he is not a man to imitate his adversaries in any respect whatever. His answer is a masterpiece of eloquence, of sarcasms, of gall, of passion, of false reasoning, of bad faith, of madness, and of atrocity. Never was such an abuse of great talents.

I am not severe; I do not reproach our author with his acrimony in speaking of the council of Geneva; I do not reproach him with his satirical, violent, passionate tone, which respects nothing, and which falls very *mal-à-propos* upon the body of the ministers, towards whom he ought to have practised particular forbearance. If these *Letters from the Mountains* are compared with the *Epistle Dedicatory*, which he addressed to the republic ten years ago, we shall find the most curious contrast between them. But what I think a great reproach to him, what appears to me even criminal, is the manner in which he has treated the fundamental constitution of his country; in pretending to support it he aims strokes which tend to demolish it entirely, to crush it to very atoms. It is not here a question of absurd religious opinions, which have no immediate influence on the public happiness; the question is no less than that of arming citizens against citizens. The author declares frankly, at the end of his work, that he considers the burghers as having a right to take up arms against the council,—and all for what?—because they have burnt *Emilius*. This work has excited a fermentation at Geneva, the consequences of which it is difficult to foresee. A person of very good sense and understanding has just written to the following effect upon the subject; but since his letter, the troubles have increased, nor do they seem likely soon to be calmed.

"I have scarcely courage to mention the unhappy Jean Jacques. I loved him, it was a pleasure to me to admire him, and I conceived myself, in reading his works, much indebted to him; but at present he compels me to adopt a very different opinion. He has just published a book the most ingeniously atrocious that ever was seen. I will allow, that he perhaps does justice to our ministers, but the rest is a mere tissue of malignity and calumnies. Some true principles, some facts altered, others placed in an artful point of view, criminal concealments, frightful consequences, tending to destroy our constitution, to create perhaps a civil war among us, to compromise the independence of our state, that great source of all our happiness;—the book, in short, almost turns my head.

"For a week past I have not been able to read any thing else, to think of any thing else, or to talk of any thing else. The book is wonderfully well written, it is clever, it is seductive in the highest degree. The tone of the purest virtue which the author knows so well how to assume, only renders it the more dangerous; yet passion pierces so much through the coolness and calmness which he affects, that I cannot help flattering myself those who really love their country will be cooled in their enthusiasm towards the writer. My heart bleeds when I see such an abuse of extraordinary talents; I am terrified, struck with

horror, when I find that hypocrisy, pride, and revenge are the leading sentiments of a man justly and universally celebrated, who is admired by all Europe, and who is honoured, for want of being better known, with the title of a philosopher.

"Tell me, in the name of heaven, and from yourself to me, whether this book is much read at Paris, and what people think of it. Our government, according to all appearance, will be obliged to publish a manifesto upon the subject, for the instruction of foreign courts, for there is no reason why foreigners should at once believe Rousseau malignant and guilty of gross imposition.: *Vitam impendere vero!*—What truths, good heaven!—You may believe me, I am not by any means over partial to our council, but, upon my honour, this book is the work of a disturber of the public repose.

"Pardon so much babble; write to me and console me: we have all here great occasion for sympathy and kind offices. Notwithstanding this we eat our trouts amid grumbling, and still laugh with the ends of our lips. Read these *Letters from the Mountains;* you know Geneva too well, you are too good a patriot not to do them justice, and that will be my excuse."

The art of the most ordinary sophist consists in bringing forward the favourable side of his argument, and in keeping every thing that makes against it in the back ground; this is Jean

Jacques' favourite method. He gives to the council of Geneva, which he calls an assembly of five and twenty tyrants, the atrocious and supple conduct of a very clever individual. It is certain that a man of a profound and subtle spirit, and with a head cool enough never to make a false calculation, might finish, if he were immortal, by being master of the world; but a body of any kind, if it have the advantage of being immortal, can never have that unity of will, that concert among themselves, which is necessary to the constant success of their enterprizes. Not to go any farther than Geneva, half the council is always in the interests of the people, because popular favour is indispensable to them for arriving at the syndicate, and maintaining themselves there. Judge then of the possibility of any unanimity and secrecy among them, for carrying on ambitious projects against the rights of the people. These projects, besides, must have some aim and end; but in all the odious views which Jean Jacques ascribes to the council of Geneva, we see no other interest, no other advantage to them, as a body, but doing ill gratuitously, but establishing themselves a reputation for tyranny and violence, without gaining any thing on the side of power or ambition. On the other hand, the conduct of the people is every where represented by the author as that of the most perfect honesty and wisdom; as the deportment of those who do not

know how to take one improper step, or infringe upon the rights of others. Indeed we know well, that it is a thing wholly unexampled in history for incendiaries to lead the multitude astray from their duties and their true interests, and to make them the instruments of their passions and pernicious views; we all know that the multitude are far above such things. When this bad faith is employed in the discussion of some idle, trivial question, let a man seduce the vulgar, while, in spite of the magic of his style, he displeases persons of sound and reflecting minds, who are little touched with an eloquence that is employed only in establishing paradoxes;—let these things be so, all this is matter of great indifference;—but when this bad faith and these talents are employed to disturb the repose even of the most insignificant state, they become frightful and horrible. If there be a crime of high treason upon the earth, it is certainly that of attacking the fundamental constitution of a state with the arms that M. Rousseau has employed to overturn that of his country.

The work in question is not yet sufficiently known at Paris to decide upon its success, but in general those who have read it seem to find it somewhat *ennuyeux*. One must be acquainted with the constitution of Geneva, and know a variety of anecdotes of the republic, to feel all the venom of these sophisms. They who do not

know at what the different strokes are aimed, find the letters insipid. The author practises the utmost forbearance towards the French and their parliaments; it seems obvious from this, that he has not renounced all hope of returning to France. But he deceives himself; the *Letters from the Mountains* will not hasten the annulling of the decrees against him.

The conduct of this celebrated man is very extraordinary; he turned catholic in his youth, and at forty-five years of age he has returned to protestantism; in this he considers himself as having performed a very courageous action. He has cultivated letters all his life, yet denounces them as the prime source of corruption. He has written several theatrical pieces, bad ones indeed, which were submitted to the correction of Marivaux, and he afterwards wrote against the stage. At his return from Venice he was so little touched with the Italian music that he sung the operas of Lulli with delight; he composed an opera himself, entirely in the French taste, entitled *Les Muses Galantes*, but it was never judged of sufficient merit to be played; and some years after he denied in print that there was such a thing as music in France. Ten years ago he extolled the constitution of Geneva as the masterpiece of the human mind, and at present he treats it as the masterpiece of iniquity and oppression. He writes at this moment against miracles, and by a singular

fate he formerly made a juridical attestation of one performed by the bishop of Annecy in Savoy. My dear friend, Jean Jacques, this is sporting too much with mankind. You may be in the right to treat us all as fools, but if you are incessantly telling us that it is night in the meridian sunshine of noon, you will, perhaps, one day find some one who will take it into his head to assert boldly that it is day, and your credit may be lost.

A man of some talents, and a very honest man who had not read the *Letters from the Mountains*, but had heard a great deal of the troubles which this work has excited at Geneva, says that Jean Jacques Rousseau ought to be addressed in an harangue to the following effect. "You have "undoubtedly merited well of your country, "which is ornamented by your talents, and it "is very possible that your fellow-citizens have "not shewn you all the regard and respect that "they ought. But Cimon, Themistocles, Aris-"tides and Miltiades were more unworthily treat-"ed by the Athenians than you have been by the "Genevese, yet they murmured not. Themis-"tocles was almost the founder of Athens, and "you are not in any way the founder of Gene-"va; you have not yet, like Miltiades, beat the "great sovereign of Asia by sea and by land; if "you have neither the martial or pacific virtues "of Cimon, you would at least be as virtuous "and as just as Aristides. When these brave and

" glorious citizens were ignominiously banished
" from their town, driven from their houses, torn
" from the bosoms of their wives, and the arms of
" their children, they went away, wishing to their
" ungrateful country men who would love her as
" much as they had done, and who would serve
" her as faithfully. Did any one of them ever
" think of revenging himself, of arming citizen
" against citizen in his cause, of making the
" streets, the public places, the temples, stream
" with blood?—And if it had happened that a
" single drop of blood had been shed, that a single
" citizen of Geneva had been massacred, would
" the injury done to your Emilius have merited so
" horrible an atonement? I know that you do
" not want eloquence to shew me that Themisto-
" cles, that Aristides, that Miltiades did what was
" right, and that you yourself also have done
" what was right, and I feel that it would require
" all your own talents to answer you; but what
" I feel still more forcibly is, that it requires
" infinite eloquence to make an apology for your
" conduct, and none at all to make one for theirs;
" the greatest efforts of reasoning would be neces-
" sary to make me find you blameless, and I find
" them not merely blameless, but just and virtuous,
" at a single glance."

Jean Jacques Rousseau would certainly not be of accord here as to the services rendered. What were the victories of Themistocles and Miltiades

in comparison with his writings? He has done honour to his country, he says, in the eyes of all Europe; before him the Genevese name was almost held in opprobium; Geneva has only become respectable and illustrious since she gave birth to Jean Jacques Rousseau. His modesty equals his services. It is a pleasant contrast enough, by the bye, to see Rousseau thus setting his own country into a flame at the moment when he has undertaken the office of legislator for Corsica. It is said, however, now to be certain, that the letter which he received, as from Paoli, was the work of some pretender to wit, who chose to amuse himself at his expence.

February, 1765.

The Abbé de Boufflers has been celebrated from his earliest youth for great wit and talents, and for being extremely rattle-pated. Several jolly songs, politely profane, the *Tale of the Queen of Golconda*, written at the seminary of Saint Sulpicius, where he was in training to become a bishop, and a scrupulous argumentation with his conscience, no doubt; all combined to make him feel that his call to the Episcopacy was not very genuine. But since it was a question to preserve to himself a rental of forty thousand livres, in benefices which King Stanislaus, out of friendship to the mother of our little prelate, had bestowed upon him from his infancy, he has exchanged the

surplice and hood for the cross of Malta; that being no obstacle to the holding of benefices; instead of the Abbé, he is now, therefore, become the Chevalier de Boufflers. In this capacity he made his first essay in arms in Hesse, during the campaign of 1762. The Chevalier de Boufflers had lost nothing of the charms as a companion, of that agreeable negligence, carelessness, and rattle-patedness, for which the Abbé had always been celebrated; these qualities were only deprived of the additional zest they received from being a subject of scandal. He addressed a letter upon this change of state to his former preceptor, which is extremely well written, and which I shall subjoin.

The Chevalier de Boufflers would be a man of no ordinary stamp, if his head could ever be fully ripened; but of that no immediate symptoms have hitherto appeared. M. de St. Lambert called him one day *Voisenon the Great;* this is a most incomparable idea. He was in the army, as in the circles of Paris, full of gaiety and good humour. To one of his horses he gave the name of *Prince Ferdinand,* to another, that of the *Hereditary Prince.* One day, when he had some company with him, he called to one of his grooms, and enquired of him, with a very serious air, whether Prince Ferdinand and the Hereditary Prince had been curried? "Yes, Sir," answered the groom. "I have them curried every morn-

ing," said he, turning coolly to the company. "You see I know somewhat more of the matter "than Messieurs the Marshals."

He has just been making a tour over Switzerland, and since, among other talents, he possesses that of painting very well; he took the fancy into his head to pass himself off as a painter, and, in all the towns through which he passed, he was employed to paint the portraits of the principal inhabitants, especially of the pretty women. The sitters certainly did not find their sittings dull; the songs, the verses, the pleasant stories and anecdotes with which they were entertained, served to enliven the countenances which the painter was to delineate upon the canvas; and, to put the finishing stroke to his character, as a very singular person, he asked no more than half-a-crown for a portrait. But when he arrived at Geneva, where he had determined to resume his own name and character, he was with difficulty believed to be the person he called himself, and was in great danger of being treated as a mere adventurer.

Letter from the Abbé de Boufflers to the Abbé Porquet, written at the beginning of the Year 1762.

At length, my dear Abbé, I am on the eve of executing a project which I have long had much at heart, but which your reason has always condemned,—that of changing my state. It is, indeed, no trifling matter to have, as it were, to

recommence life at the age of twenty-four. You will tell me, perhaps, that I ought to reflect more upon it than my time of life, and still more the natural vivacity of my disposition, will permit; but do not condemn me till you have heard me for the last time; and since in matters of individual happiness there can be no good judges but the parties themselves, allow me, if you please, both to plead and to decide in my own cause.

I was in the road to fortune, the first steps that I had made sufficed to assure me of it. The most favourable circumstances seemed combined to present to my imagination very brilliant prospects for the future. Without any merit of my own, I might, like many others, have obtained still further preferment; who knows whether with the aid only of a few more cabals and intrigues I might not have been placed at the head of the clergy?—but I preferred to be Aide-de-camp in the army of the Prince de Soubise: *Trahit sua quemque voluptas.* The first rule of conduct is not to become rich and powerful, it is to know our true desires, and to follow them. Alexander, with the gold of Asia in his coffers, and the sceptre of the universe in his hands, sought happiness in Babylon; and a little peasant of eighteen finds it in his cottage, provided he can obtain in marriage the pretty shepherdess whom he loves.

But let us quit Alexander and return to myself, confessing that I bear a much stronger

resemblance to the little peasant than to him. You know that extreme ardour and impetuosity of blood, a mind thoughtless and inconsiderate, with great independence of spirit, are the leading features of my character: compare such a character with the duties of the profession to which I was destined, and then say whether I was suited to it. You are not ignorant how impossible it is for me, and how necessary it is for an ecclesiastic, to conceal his wishes, to disguise his thoughts, to take care of every thing that he says; and above all, to prevent others scrutinizing too narrowly what he does. Think farther of the atrocious hatreds, the black jealousies, the unworthy perfidies which inhabit the bosoms of priests, more than of any other set of people, and then think of all the advantages which my simplicity, my indiscretion, my frankness of heart, would have given them over me; think of these things, and you will agree that I was not formed to live with such people.

Do you consider as nothing the general outcry that was raised against my conduct?—This outcry, you will perhaps say, was only raised by a parcel of fools.—So much the worse: it would have been much better that my censurers had been men of sense, the thing would then have made less noise. Fools have always the advantage of having the numbers on their side; and it is numbers which decide in most cases. We may well make war upon them, but we can never weaken them; they will

always be our masters, they will always be kings of the universe, they will always continue to dictate laws to us, to assign us our places in society. Not a practice, not a custom, not a duty, will ever be introduced among mankind of which they are not the authors; they will, in short, always force men of sense to speak, and almost to think like them, since it is in the established order of things that the vanquished should speak the language of their conquerors. Seeing me thus deeply penetrated with the almighty power of fools, can you think that I am in the wrong if I endeavour to return into favour with them? and will you not allow that I ought to consider the moment of my reconciliation with these great sovereigns of the world as one of the happiest in my life?

Pardon me if I indulge in a little gaiety in the course of my reasonings; it is the better to enable myself, and you also, to support the *ennui* of them. Besides, Horace, your friend and your model, permits us to laugh in telling the truth, and Heraclitus was certainly not the first philosopher of antiquity. But I might, you will perhaps say, in my respect for the opinion of our masters, the fools, have quitted my profession without engaging in any other; to which I shall answer, hold you there, it was the fools themselves that told me I must have some place in society. I proposed to them that of a man of letters; they bid me of all things beware of that, I was a great deal

too clever for it. I asked them what they would have me do, and this is the answer I received. "We have long desired that you should be a gen-"tleman; and our will is, at present, that every "gentleman should go to the wars." The matter was settled in a moment; I had the blue livery made without delay, I took the cross of Malta, and departed at the same moment for the army. At present I am aware that you are going to make many objections to the manner in which my determination was made. I have already made them to myself, and will detail them to you with all the sincerity and frankness which you know belong to me, while they shall be answered with a seriousness which you have no idea forms any part of my character.

In the first place, you will tell me that I have not sufficiently consulted my relations on the part I was about to take, and that I ought to have given them credit for so much affection, and such superior knowledge as to have listened to their counsels. It is true that I confined myself to imparting my intentions to my mother and my brother, without consulting them; but it was useless to consult when my determination was already made: I should have deceived them if I had asked their advice with the air of intending to be swayed by it. If they had thought, like me, things would have gone just as they do now; if

their ideas had been in contradiction with my own, I should have been mortified that I could not yield to them: I preferred the omission of a matter of form, to deceiving or acting in opposition to them. Of two evils, not of equal magnitude, you know which we ought to choose. Here you will perhaps again say, that I ought not to have formed a resolution so strong as that nothing was to shake it. To this I shall reply, but are we wholly masters of our wills?—can we at pleasure make them weak or strong?—can man, born the slave of some of his wildest fancies, command those desires alone which reason approves?—You will answer, perhaps, but ought we not always to obey our parents?—I shall say, no; *respect* to parents has no limits in extent or duration; *obedience* has a boundary marked by nature herself, it is that of the full expansion of our bodily organs, and the faculties of our minds. At this moment we enter, as it were, into the possession of ourselves, the helm of our actions is committed to our own guidance; and after having learned from others how to live, we begin to practice for ourselves. But, you will farther urge, perhaps, do we not at least owe entire confidence to a mother?—Yes, and it was that confidence which made me impart my project to her in your presence: the pain it appeared to give her prevented my ever mentioning it to her again, though it could not prevent

my pursuing it; the happiness of my life was in question, and I cannot suppose that she would have wished the sacrifice of it.

You ask me whether King Stanislaus is informed of my change of state. He has often questioned me respecting the plan of life I would choose, and for the last eighteen months I have had the courage to tell him that I was not desirous of advancement in my profession, that the kindness he had already shewn me was sufficient, that ambition was a sentiment foreign to my soul, and that I was more anxious to be happy than to be great. On such occasions he has, perhaps, begun to dilate on the plans he had formed for my advancement, in which there was doubtless wherewithal to dazzle a mind that had not imbibed the soundest philosophy in the lessons, and still more in the example of him himself. My reply was that he might add to the favours with which he had loaded me, but that he could never add to my gratitude, nor to my content, and that I should gain more in imitating his moderation than in accumulating the effects of his favours. Though surprized at my thus setting bounds to his kindness he accepted my answer, and has for some time ceased to renew his offers.

I have here I think said enough with regard to the situation I have quitted; let us turn at present to what concerns that which I have embraced. Here begins the history of my goings astray, and

I must confess them. You know very well, my dear friend, my unfortunate wrong-headedness, nor is it necessary to recapitulate to you a long list of my follies. It suffices simply to recal to your mind the odium I drew upon myself by my *Songs from the Isle of Adam;* how horrible it was thought at Paris and at Versailles that, wearing the ecclesiastical habit, I could write stanzas in a style of obscenity not pardonable even in a person of a less holy profession. The persons who wanted to vilify me at court took great care not to say that my natural wildness was increased by several glasses of Champagne, and that I did not understand till the morrow the full meaning of what I had written the evening before. I was condemned unanimously, and unfortunately with justice. I endeavoured, however, to make my peace with the Dauphin, whose mind I knew had been assiduously set against me. He said to the person whom I had employed to speak in my defence, and who read him a letter which I had written upon this subject, that he would interest himself for me, and that he should be very glad to see me in a situation more suited to my turn of mind. This was what led me to think of the army, but this was a reason which I never dared urge to King Stanislaus, partly from being ashamed to acknowledge my fault, partly from the fear of afflicting him too severely, in shewing him how unworthy of all his goodness I had rendered myself.

I shall not undertake to answer those persons who may accuse me of want of gratitude towards my benefactor; I fear reproaches upon this subject very little; my heart will always speak more warmly than my calumniators; and I can assure them beforehand, that even in the moments when they would most condemn me, that heart has always cherished the tenderest remembrance of Stanislaus's kindness, and an ardent desire one day to repay all, by shewing myself worthy of it. You know the very bottom of my soul; you know that a child who should love his father and mother as I love that king, would almost pass the bounds of his duty, if such duty can have any bounds. I may say, rather more to the honour of my sensibility than of my talents, that twice when I have had occasion to mention him in speeches at the academy I have drawn tears of sympathy from the whole assembly. Many persons have wept at hearing a song for the day of St. Stanislaus, which was a mere effusion of sentiment, since it was too little laboured to be the result of reflection. In short, whenever an opportunity has been presented of paying my homage to all that I admire in this king, and of displaying his true character to those who have not had the happiness of knowing him as intimately as I do, I have been told that the subject inspired me with an extraordinary degree of eloquence, and I am very happy that I do not display an equal share on other occasions since I

thus offer a strong proof of the love and veneration I feel towards him.

Conclude, my dear Abbé, from my long letter, and still more from the long time that we have lived together, that I may, as not unfrequently happens to me, be hurried away from the strict line of duty by the levity of my soul, by the vivacity of my age, by the force of my passions, but that I will sooner die than deviate from the character of an honest man: *Ante pudor, quam te violo, aut tua jura resolvo.*

Mademoiselle Clairon has just had a quarrel of a very comic nature with M. de Saint-Foix, author of two dramatic trifles, *The Graces* and *The Oracle*. Who could have supposed that the author of two pieces so refined, so honied, so gallant, was a man of rough and brutal manners? This, however, is the case; never was the character of an author in more perfect contrast with that of his writings. One day the tragedy of Olympia was to be played at court, with M. de Saint-Foix's afterpiece *The Graces*. Our author was very desirous that the king should see his piece, but since his *Most Christian Majesty* does not love dramatic performances so well as M. de Saint-Foix loves his own works, the latter was obliged to get it signified to the royal spectator that the whole representation, including the afterpiece, would not last more than two hours. In order, therefore, to bring

it within that time, he requested Mademoiselle Doligny, who was to play the companion of Olympia, a mute personage, to quit the stage in the middle of the fifth act, and dress herself for her character in the afterpiece, that the latter might be begun the moment the tragedy was finished. Olympia Clairon, informed of this arrangement, and extremely angry that it had been made without consulting her, told M. de Saint-Foix, that it was a very extraordinary piece of assurance in him to pretend to fix any time for the duration of the tragedy; that according as she judged proper to declaim her part, she would make it a full quarter of an hour longer or shorter; adding, that if Mademoiselle Doligny quitted the stage a single instant before the conclusion of the tragedy, she would stop and not finish it at all. The mute confidant took care not to disobey her princess; a long interval ensued between the play and the afterpiece, and his majesty, in spite of all his gallantry to the fair sex, marched off before *The Graces* appeared. The poet, enraged beyond measure, thought to revenge himself upon the heroine by the following epigram;—he did not, however, chuse to own it, but got a friend to read it at a supper where a large company was assembled, as a thing in common circulation. It shared the fate it merited; it was pulled to pieces line by line, and found to be detestable; and, for the first time in his life, M. de Saint-Foix was obliged to sneak into him-

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self, and join in the general condemnation. To understand this miserable effusion of spleen and brutality, it must be observed that Fretillon was the name by which Mademoiselle Clairon was first known, and that her conduct in the early part of her life had been very licentious.

For the celebrated Fretillon
A medallion, they say, has been struck.
But at whatever price it is sold,
Whether for twelve sous or for only one,
It will never be as common
As her person was formerly.

A person of talents will draw some advantage from every thing; an admirer of Mademoiselle Clairon's parodied this villainous production in the following manner:

For the inimitable Clairon
A medallion, they say, has been struck.
But whatever lustre may surround it,
How fine, how precious soever it may be,
It can never be so dear in our eyes,
As at this moment is her person.

Another admirer is about to publish a collection, which shall include all that has ever been said and written in praise of Mademoiselle Clairon. This collection will not fail to find many censors, and I fear will only increase the number of those who say that Mademoiselle Dumesnil, with much greater and more correct talents, has also much more simplicity and modesty. In the collection will be found, among other offerings, the design

made for her by the celebrated Garrick, (who by the way has been at Paris these three months) in which she is represented as crowned by Melpomene, with this quatrain underneath:

That Clairon would adorn the tragic scene
I oft foretold, nor am in error found;
By her Melpomene long crown'd has been,
Now by Melpomene we see her crown'd.

These verses have already been inserted in the public papers, which Mr. Garrick has considered as doing them great honour. They were made almost immediately upon his arrival at Paris, at a supper at Mademoiselle Clairon's, and he calls them only a piece of gallantry in answer to the politeness shewn him by this celebrated actress.

March, 1765.

Although for three centuries past some of the ablest men have occupied themselves with developing and elucidating the principles and the theory of governments, we must confess that upon this subject, as well as upon many others, we have done nothing hitherto but babble. Philosophers permit themselves too lightly an abuse of words; and how should that be otherwise, since it is the multitude always that pay for it. From this facility of haranguing without ideas, and the certainty of gaining a hearing notwithstanding, has resulted that habit of prattling, which is one of the most cruel scourges of modern literature, one hitherto

much too little discouraged, one of the inconveniences attending upon the easy multiplication of books through the medium of the press, and one which will contribute in the end, and that in no slight degree, to the ruin of learning and philosophy. It signifies little what terms are used in putting forth a jargon which really has no meaning, nor would the philosophy of that great genius to whom Alexander the Great owed his early education, be more endurable than our own, if disfigured by the jargon in use among our doctors.

In matters of government, *liberty* and *despotism* are two terms with which we are sure to make an uniform impression upon all minds, the one agreeable, the other very disagreeable. Nothing is easier than to set forth, in fine language, and with great eloquence, all the advantages of liberty; but where in fact is liberty to be found? what corner of the earth does it inhabit? can it really exist among mankind, after the manner in which we find it represented in books?—These are questions which cannot be lightly answered. The phantom of despotism, is perhaps, not better known than the chimera of liberty.

M. de Montesquieu has brought three other terms much into vogue in these days; he pretends to explain the springs of every sort of government by the words *virtue*, *honour*, *fear*. *Virtue* he makes the principle of republics; *honour*, that of mixed monarchies; *fear*, that of despotic states.

This view of the spirit of these different sorts of governments is undoubtedly that of a man of genius; but in examining it closely I am afraid it will be found more ingenious than solid. M. de Voltaire has somewhere pretty clearly demonstrated, that there is no real distinction to be made, between republican virtue and monarchical honour. Without entering into a discussion of this question, I must observe that I have seen, in states where the government is monarchical, a body of nobility that had no idea of what we call *honour* in France,—this prejudice was absolutely unknown among them; perhaps it is a sentiment which belongs exclusively to the nobles of France and Spain. But even if it were as general in all monarchies, and was as truly a part of their essence, as to me it appears otherwise, there are at least many other elements quite as necessary to form the genuine spirit of the monarchical government. Honour is often even contrary to the well-being of the state; if the principles of honour in an individual may turn to the general advantage, the same principles among bodies often prove pernicious. The honour of bodies almost always consists in maintaining some absurdity either new or old, of no importance whatever to the public good, of no importance even to the majority of those that compose these bodies, but which every one is, nevertheless, obliged to defend with such pertinacity, that he who would shew himself some-

what more reasonable, and would detach himself from the general opinion, must lose his reputation even in the eyes of the sovereign himself; he indeed commonly, far from giving such a person credit for his resistance, would be even displeased at it.

However the forms of governments may vary, they all tend to two opposite ends, *liberty* and *despotism*. These two opposing principles form a constant counterbalance to each other in mixed governments;—in a decided government, on the contrary, one of them has always the supremacy over the other. But what is *liberty?*—what is *despotism?*—These are two questions which, in spite of all the efforts of our philosophers, are not well explained; and I fear that it may be the same case with *liberty* as with *truth*, that man is formed to desire it ardently without being worthy of it.

The Abbé Galiani maintains, that all men are by nature born with an extreme desire to interfere in matters which do not in the least concern them; and he makes the essence of liberty consist in the right of intermeddling in the affairs of others. This definition, which appears at the first glance a turn purely jocose, becomes profound and philosophic in proportion as we examine it more closely. The essence of despotism consists in being prevented meddling in the concerns of others, and it is this prohibition which produces a general apathy of mind, and all the other evils attendant upon a

despotic government; instead of which the right of mingling in concerns not our own, produces in free states, and in states under mixed governments, that continual action and re-action of the different members of the body politic the one upon the other, whence results vigour of constitution in a state, as the health of the animal body depends on the free circulation of all the humours.

In despotic governments the Sultan gives his orders to the vizier, the vizier to the pasha, the pasha to the cadi; every thing is isolated, nothing holds together; there is action, but no re-action. In free or mixed governments the sovereign has a council or senate, each member of which is connected by relationship, or at least by friendship, with some of the most considerable families of the state, and this council usually transmits the will of the sovereign to the states, to the parliaments, or to such other bodies as have any share in the government. These bodies have the right to make their reflections upon them; all things are interwoven the one within the other; every thing is a subject of negociation, every citizen has a right to interfere in something which does not particularly concern him personally. Here is constant action and re-action.

It is so certain that the public happiness depends upon this right, and this desire to be interfering in something, that in forming to ourselves a faithful picture of the situation of the subject of a

despotic empire, and of that of the citizen of a free state, we find all the advantages apparently on the side of the former. An English officer in garrison at Gibraltar, went one day to make a little excursion on the coast of Africa, which he had constantly seen from his windows ever since his first arrival in the fortress. He landed at Tetuan, where he fell into conversation with a burgher of the town. "I pity you much," said the latter, "for being obliged to live in that nest, where you "are perched up with your fellow-countrymen; "you must find it horribly dull; you must surely "be ready to die with *ennui.*" The Englishman, exceedingly astonished to find himself an object of pity with an inhabitant of Tetuan, began to question him upon his mode of life, upon the laws, upon the police of his town; when he learned that he paid nothing to the state, that nobody meddled in his concerns, that by abstaining from theft and murder he was never called to any account for his actions; in short, few people seemed so free as the citizens of Tetuan. During the conversation the Englishman requested to be conducted to the governor's house. "No," replied the citizen, "he "is very ill-humoured, and cuts heads off like "cabbages."—"You live then in a state of con-"tinual terror," said the Englishman.—"By no "means," returned the other; "I shall never in "my life have any thing to do with this governor; "what does it signify to me whether he be good

" or bad humoured. If you will come and sup " with me at my country-house, I will present you " to my wife, and my two daughters, and you " will find that I am under no uneasiness at all " with respect to our governor. All my prudence " is confined to avoiding the quarter where he lives; " and the only chagrin I experience is seeing from " my windows that nest cut in the rock, and " thinking how dull you and your companions " must find yourselves."

This Tetuanese, in painting with so much simplicity his own situation, has given the picture of every subject in a despotic state. Compare it with that of a citizen of London, or of a burgher in Holland; contemplate the burthen of taxes under which he groans, the multitude of laws and formalities which he has to attend to;—he cannot take a step without paying, without feeling shackles by which he is controuled. A citizen of London is not allowed to roast coffee in his own house. Ask a noble Venetian for an account of his prerogatives, and he will give you a list of privileges which you would rather take for so many shackles of slavery. These are, however, beings who call themselves the most free of any people in the world, and that solely from the right they have reserved to themselves of taking some share in the imposition of taxes and other shackles; of meddling, in short, with the affairs of others.

It cannot be doubted but that the great and

real advantages of liberty lie in this action and re-action of the several classes of citizens, the one upon the other; that it is this which gives and preserves life to the body politic; while the want of re-action, that isolated and perpendicular action, if I may call it so, of despotic governments, every where produces stagnation with the evils that result from it; and that notwithstanding the apparently mild and tranquil situation of each individual. The wants, the ends, and the fates of those who, whether by choice or by chance, take on themselves publicly the trade of meddling in the concerns of others, are, as well as the parts they play, very various. The parliament of Paris having thought fit to concern itself with the profession of faith of the Savoyard curate, and having obliged the protector of it in consequence to quit France, that same protector all on a sudden found himself pressed by a terrible want to meddle in the happiness of his country, where he had never lived, nor could be satisfied till he had filled all Geneva with troubles and divisions. The consistory of Neufchâtel feels also on its side a necessity of meddling with the *Letters from the Mountains*, and disturbing Jean Jacques Rousseau in his retreat. The history of human kind is filled with examples of men, who can never rest without meddling with the concerns of others, and who out of this want create themselves a title to teaze and torment their neighbours.

The Marquis d'Argenson, who, while he was alive, filled for some years the office of minister for foreign affairs, has just proved, by his example, a truth which was in no want of proofs, that it is much more easy to interfere in the concerns of others in quality of an author than in quality of a statesman and counsellor. The marquis will never have a place assigned him in the list of great and good ministers with which France has been blessed; but as an author he has left behind him a good work. His *Strictures upon the ancient and present government of France*, was known in manuscript during his life; it has just been printed in Holland, in one large volume octavo, but from so incorrect a manuscript, that there is scarcely a page where the sense has not, in some sort, suffered.

The author begins by tracing the march of the ancient and modern government of France. He exposes, well enough, the inconveniencies of the feudal government; he also speaks sensibly of the other governments of Europe, though, for want of being sufficiently instructed upon the subject, he falls every now and then into error. The enlarged views of the man of genius are every where wanting; but they are supplied by a kind-heartedness which naturally disposes the writer to indulgence. We can always pass our time without regret, with one who has good sense and a good heart. His plans for the administration of the

country consist in establishing a democratic and municipal government in the heart of the monarchy, and in annihilating the aristocracy of the nobles and of the parliaments. Little cantons governing themselves, under the authority of a monarch, would cultivate good morals, patriotism, and œconomy, and could not give umbrage to government. Without a revolution of this sort, he thinks that France will be for a long time exposed to a great scourge on the score of her finances; and those who would regret, in this change, the imaginary advantages of the bulwark formed by the parliaments between the king and the people, may be good people, but are certainly short-sighted, and the dupes of words.

Objections without end may undoubtedly be raised against the details of a work of this kind; but the details are matters of indifference. All depends, as to what concerns the theory, in laying down good principles; and, as to the execution, in having strong nerves, and being strongly fortified with resolution. The book is not well written, but it is clear; and, as I have already said, is rendered attractive by the patriotism and kind-heartedness of the author. These qualities formed the essential features in the character of the Marquis d'Argenson, but he was devoid of dignity. This defect, less to be endured in a minister for foreign affairs than in almost any other post, could find no indulgence in a country which can

sooner pardon any thing than the absence of such a quality. A mean and trivial manner of expressing himself did this minister greater injury than much more serious faults of a different kind would have done. The Count d'Argenson, his brother, was the first to feel this, and to dismiss him. His disgrace had no influence upon his happiness. He lived peaceably, sometimes at Paris, sometimes in the country, dividing his leisure between his friends and the society of men of letters, whom he cherished and received at his house with great distinction. Under the reign of the Argensons, it was not yet become the fashion to hate philosophy.

The ninth of this month a definitive decree was given at the Court of Requests, by which the memory of the unfortunate Calas is cleared, and his widow, with one of her sons, the young Lavaysse, and the maid-servant are discharged from the prosecution instituted against them; the fine and costs are, moreover, remitted, and an order is made for the decree to be affixed, wherever it is requisite, by the care of the king's attorney-general. It has also been decreed, that the King shall be petitioned to forbid, by his royal declaration, the procession which is made every year at Toulouse, in hatred of the Calvinists, and which keeps up in the town a barbarous spirit of animosity against these people wholly adverse to the principles of religion, and of Christian charity.

The decree of the Requests was issued on the same day, and at the same hour, that poor Calas expired in torments, three years ago. This piece of solemn puerility, in a cause of such a nature, has given me inexpressible pain; it produced in me, indeed, a sensation of horror, for which I can scarcely account to myself; it gave me the idea of children playing with daggers and the instruments of the executioner. For some days before the decree was published, several memorials had appeared, which cannot be read without tears. One was published by M. Mariette, another by M. Elias de Beaumont; in the latter there is some declamation, but not enough to diminish the native force of the subject. A very affecting letter from M. de Voltaire, has also been published, by which we learn that another protestant family of Languedoc experienced, almost at the same time, a similar injustice from the parliament of Toulouse.—O fatal impunity!—This family, whose name is Sirven, has also taken refuge with our patriarch.

M. de Voltaire has just fixed himself for the rest of his life at Ferney; he has given up his former house, *Délices*, to M. Tronchin, of whom he rented it. The troubles at Geneva have perhaps disgusted him so far, as to put him out of humour with any situation within its territory; perhaps also the derangement in his affairs may

have contributed to this change. M. de Voltaire has set no bounds to his beneficence since he has been at Geneva; and his niece has no order or economy whatever in the management of his house. When this celebrated man first established himself in his late residence, he had an annual income of more than a hundred thousand livres, and in one commercial house alone at Lyons, had a capital of eight hundred thousand livres: this capital is entirely consumed. I doubt much whether he suspects that I am thus well-informed with regard to the state of his finances. The Duke of Wurtemberg ought to pay him an annuity of thirty thousand livres; but this has not been paid for some time, notwithstanding which he has recently lent a further sum of fifty thousand crowns upon the same security, without consulting with any one, or even making known his intention. All these reasons have probably contributed to fixing M. de Voltaire at his house at Ferney. He has pulled down the pretty little theatre which he had himself erected; thus no more plays, at least, till some new order of things. All these reforms would excite in me some apprehensions with regard to the state of his mind, if I had not observed in all his letters the same delightful vein of gaiety which has always distinguished them.

The *Gazette of France* has devoted its pages for some months past to consigning to immortality

the scenes of horror and pathos that have passed in the Gevaudan, from the ravages of the beast, together with the heroic actions to which they have given occasion. One day we are told of a mother who has defended three children at once with incredible heroism; the next, a troop of five children have put him completely to flight. The oldest of these warriors, the illustrious Portefaix, who has not yet completed his eleventh year, performed prodigies of valour; and has furnished the Gazette with an article, which, indeed, might almost be called in itself a heroic poem. As, however, the authors of this same Gazette ought to be historians only, not poets, one might fairly ask upon what authority all the wonders they record are stated?—For it must be observed, that the exploits of the young Portefaix will lose much of their heroism, if they were witnessed by any one whose testimony is worthy of attention; such a witness we cannot but suppose must have been capable of giving assistance, which would have dispensed with the young hero's performing prodigies so much beyond his age; and we can hardly suppose that any able-bodied man would stand aloof as a mere spectator of what was passing. The credibility of these mighty deeds rests then upon the testimony of five children!—add to these five, the children who edite the *Gazette of France*, and the children who believe in the stories, and we have childish doings enough to satisfy the most deter-

mined *amateur*. Be this as it may, an anonymous poet has just published an epic poem, entitled *Portefaix*. In length it is certainly well adapted to the subject of which it treats, as it consists of two cantos, which together occupy five pages and a half. This is a childish length, and the number of pages is perhaps designed as typical of the number of heroes that it celebrates.

M. de Buffon, who has not an equal taste for the marvellous with the authors of the *Gazette of France*, says, that the history of the beast of the Gevaudan, is that of several fierce wolves, who will disappear as summer comes on: it is thus that fabulous antiquity ascribes to one Hercules alone the labours of several heroes. The people who have suffered by these ravages have a different theory. They believe their enemy to be a sorcerer in disguise, and that it is useless to think of driving him away. A peasant, who, in the main, is an honest man, and deserving of credit, has made a formal juridical deposition, that the animal in passing him, as it was taking an extraordinary leap, whispered him in the ear, "Now confess "that this is not a bad leap for an old man of "ninety to take."

Nothing can be more melancholy than all the details we hear with respect to the unfortunate Jean Calas. This man was an honest tradesman; his fortune, including his stock in trade, amounted

to more than a hundred thousand livres, the greatest part of which has been consumed in the expenses, or rather the rapines, of justice. His widow remains, with five children on her hands, and the old female servant, whose simplicity and resolution have attracted such universal interest and respect; she is now seventy years of age. For the maintenance of so many persons, Madame Calas has no resource but an appeal to the public generosity, and the hope of being able to reclaim twenty-four thousand livres, the portion she brought her husband. The former is a resource, which it is much to be feared must ere long be exhausted: the more abundantly the public benevolence has hitherto been exercised towards these sufferers, the greater danger there is that it must soon fail; such things cannot, from their very nature, be lasting. The expenses of the suit instituted against the sentence by which the victim was condemned, have amounted to fifty thousand livres, all of which has been paid by voluntary subscription. A farther expense to a very considerable amount must be incurred for publishing the decision of the Court of Requests in favour of Calas; in particular the signification of this decision to the parliament of Toulouse will be very expensive.

These unfortunate sufferers have all been presented to the king and the royal family. His Majesty was pleased to order them a benefaction of thirty thousand livres, half of which is to be for

the widow, six thousand livres each for the two daughters, three thousand for the son Peter, and three thousand for the servant. The comptroller-general has announced to Madame Calas that this sum will be paid, in three years, by instalments of twelve thousand livres each year. Such a mode of payment will render the benefaction in a great degree nugatory.

Amidst all their distress we learn that a subscription has been opened in England for them, and we are desirous of imitating so good an example, sorry that our means are very limited. M. de Carmontel, reader to the Duke de Chartres, without being a regular artist, sketches in a pleasing manner, and with great facility; he has a very happy talent at catching a likeness, seizing particularly the spirit and character of the countenance. He has made a drawing of the Calas family. The widow is seated in an arm chair; in her countenance may be read very plainly the history of her misfortune; her eldest daughter, who has a pleasing face, sits by her side, with her head reclined upon her arm; the youngest stands behind her mother, leaning upon the back of the chair; nothing can be more pleasing and interesting than her whole figure, she strongly resembles a virgin of Guido; the expression of sadness in her countenance, arising from her misfortunes, renders her natural graces still more affecting. These three figures, all perfect likenesses, have

their eyes fixed upon the young Lavaysse, who is standing opposite to them, reading the memorial just published by Elias de Beaumont; Peter Calas, the son, stands behind looking over him. Between this groupe and that of the mother and daughters is the old servant standing, and listening also to the young man who reads. Peter Calas is, of all the groupe, the one whose countenance carries the strongest traces of his mind being soured by the misfortunes of the family; the countenance of the young Lavaysse is extremely sweet and mild. This drawing, which is in every point of view highly interesting, we propose to have engraved for the benefit of Madame Calas, the expences of the engraving to be defrayed by those who have projected the plan, for we cannot suffer any one else to share them with us; and it is intended to open a subscription for the print, the better to give our own and other nations an opportunity of coming forward on an occasion worthy to excite the interest of all Europe. We do not pretend to offer to the public a chef-d'œuvre in the graphic art, but we offer them what will carry a deeper interest to every benevolent heart, a memorial of virtue and innocence shamefully wronged, and but poorly avenged; the print will be invaluable if it can serve as a lesson, and warning against similar outrages in future.

Every part of the history of this wretched family, as I have said above, is horrible in the

extreme. Scarcely had the mother been a month in concealment after the judicial murder of her husband, when, her asylum being discovered, her two daughters were arrested by a *lettre-de-cachet* and carried away from her. The sisters were separated and immured in different convents, in order that they might be converted to the Catholic religion. The eldest experienced many hardships in her confinement; the youngest, by her angelic sweetness, won over all the society to her side. It was only when the cause of the family became known all over Europe, and almost every tongue exclaimed against the treatment they had received, that the public outcry forced the government to restore the children to their mother. If ever we should presume to vaunt to posterity the superior illumination of the present age, and the progress that the spirit of philosophy has made in it, the tragedy of Toulouse will undoubtedly be held up to us, as the subject of eternal shame and confusion. What can we oppose to this stigma?—We can with pride hold forth to lasting admiration the man who, after having secured to himself, by his genius and varied talents, the admiration of all Europe, was courageous enough to plead the cause of innocence against fanaticism, and fortunate enough to procure to oppressed virtue a tardy atonement. It is fine to have been the author of the *Henriade*, but it is glorious to have been the protector of the widow and orphan.

The young Lavayssè is not included in the king's bounty. His father, an advocate of great note in the parliament of Toulouse, enjoys, besides a high reputation, a handsome fortune. Although this suit has cost him a considerable sum, he is very well satisfied with having been forgotten. I know not whether those who have forgotten him have equal reason to be satisfied.

We cannot say that this philosophic age has been favorable to the fortunes of philosophers; the succeeding generation may perhaps be more equitable; at all times gratitude has been a posthumous child. The philosopher Diderot, after thirty years of literary labours, has found himself under the necessity of parting with his library in order to provide for the education of an only daughter. For four or five years he has been endeavouring to find a purchaser, when I thought of getting the thing mentioned to the Empress of Russia, through General Betzky, with whose acquaintance I had been honoured while he was staying in France. The answer I have just received is as follows:

"March 16.

"SIR,

"The generous protection constantly afforded by our august sovereign to whatever has any connection with the sciences, and the particular esteem she entertains for men of letters, determined me

to make a faithful report to her of the motives which, according to your letter of the tenth of February last, have determined M. Diderot to part with his library. Her heart could not learn, without the liveliest emotion, that this philosopher, so celebrated in the republic of letters, was in a situation which obliges him to sacrifice the objects of his delight, the source of his labours, the companions of his leisure hours, to paternal tenderness. Her imperial majesty, therefore, at once to give him a testimony of her esteem and of the kindness she bears him, as well as to encourage him to pursue his career, has charged me to purchase the library at the price you mention, fifteen thousand livres, but on this condition, that it remains under the care of M. Diderot for his use, till such time as her majesty shall send for it. An order for the payment of sixteen thousand livres is already expedited to Prince Galitzin, our minister at Paris. The additional thousand livres, and the same sum annually, she desires may be accepted for the care of the books, and for making such additions as M. Diderot may think expedient. Thus is this matter concluded.

" I beg you to assure M. Diderot how much I have felt myself gratified, in having been furnished with an opportunity of being in any way useful to him.

(Signed) " J. Betzky."

Never was a favour conferred with more true delicacy. The turn is quite new;—to purchase the library and leave it with the owner as a deposit, giving at the same time a gratuity to him annually for enabling him to keep his books.

May, 1765.

I have had an opportunity afforded me of skimming over rapidly, a work of which there are not perhaps as yet three copies in Paris, and which will probably call forth the vigilance of the police, ever assiduous to preserve us from the venom of philosophy. This work has for title, *The Philosophy of History, by the late Abbé Bazin*, one vol. 8vo. It begins with the following dedication.

" To the most high and most august princess " Catherine the Second, Empress of all the Rus- " sias, protectress of the Arts and Sciences, wor- " thy by her understanding to judge of ancient " nations, as by her genius to govern her own. " Offered to her most humbly by the nephew of " the author." This style of dedication is simple and noble, and may serve as an excellent model, instead of those pompous and inflated epistles dedicatory which are in common use.

I pity from my soul the critics who will live two thousand years hence. What will they do to penetrate to the truth through the multitude of fictions in which it is enveloped; fictions which

do not impose upon contemporaries, but which to posterity will occasion embarrassments without end? Since the invention of printing has rendered books an object of trade, injustice, intolerance, and persecution have rendered these fictions indispensable, and reduced philosophy to the necessity of lying for its own safety. Books printed at Paris bear in the title-page Amsterdam, London, Berlin, Geneva. In other countries we find other fictions, and scarcely any author who is at all free in his opinions dares venture to avow having written in the place where he lives. Sometimes he borrows well-known names, sometimes he invents new ones; and when we are arrived at the honours of antiquity how will the poor critic be able to sift out the truth in the midst of so much deception.

I see from hence what a clue the commentators of the year 3765 (though probably they will then have, as their vulgar æra, some epoch very different from that whence we now date), but I see that their brains will be worn perfectly threadbare in searching out who this *late Abbé Bazin* was. Some will say that it was a historical name, and will enter into learned researches upon the life and works of the Abbé Bazin, since, they will say, that being the *late* he must have lived, as a man must live, in order to die; others will strenuously maintain that the name is supposititious, allegorical, hieroglyphical. Among the lat-

ter, those who are endowed with a little imagination will say that *bazin* was a sort of cotton cloth, very fine and very white, but contraband in France,* and that these three qualities being common to that, as they are to the candour and truth which ought to be the first qualities in a historian, the author of the *Philosophy of History* assumed the name of Bazin typically. The former will then torture their brains, and waste the midnight oil, to prove the actual existence of the Abbé Bazin; they will maintain that this great man always had the intention of writing a history (according to what was known in the eighteenth century), from the origin of the world to the time when Charlemagne, after Europe had been for so long a time ravaged by the barbarians, gave a new form and face to the whole body politic of the country. This is so true, they will say, that death having prevented his putting the finishing stroke to his work, his nephew and heir presented it, such as it was, to the illustrious Catherine, who then governed Russia with so much genius and glory. Still farther, they will say, it is evident that another celebrated writer of this period, by name Voltaire, adopted the ideas of the Abbé Bazin, and, taking up the subject where he broke off, continued it nearly upon the same plan, in a

* *Bazin* is the French name for dimity, which was not manufactured in France at this period, and the importation of it was prohibited.

work called an *Essay on General History*, which has happily been handed down to us.

In good truth the latter, without suspecting it, will approach pretty near to the truth. But should there happen to be among these critics an Abbé de Galiani, he would say to them: "Gentlemen, you are a parcel of wiseacres. Do not you see that in this eighteenth century it was very dangerous to write truth, and that philosophers were obliged to employ all sorts of contrivances to make their sentiments known, or rather to place themselves out of the reach of persecution in publishing them. Why should they have celebrated so much the principle of toleration which reigned in the courts of the north, and the protection with which the northern sovereigns honoured learning and philosophy, if they had found the same tolerance and protection in their own country. Know then that this Abbé Bazin was no other than Voltaire himself. Examine his work; you will find every where the same principles, the same style, the same manner as in the *Essay on General History*, and undertand that after having written this Essay, which begins with the Age of Charlemagne, the author wished to give an introduction to it, of a different kind from the *Discourse on Universal History*, by M. Bossuet."

O, thou Galiani of the year 3765, if thou shouldst reason thus, thou wilt have guessed right,

and thou wilt resemble, in the depth of thy genius, the Galiani of the year 1765! But let not thy conduct be like his. If fate have placed thee, like him, in the midst of a set of happy and peaceable partisans of letters, of the arts, and of reason, do not, by quitting them, plunge them into the most cruel affliction. For it is written in the book of Fate, that he who, after a stay of six years in the modern Athens, can quit it to resume the route of Naples, if he do not soon return, to calm the regrets of friendship,—if ambition can retain and fix him in his own country, shall, in his turn, grievously and eternally regret the loss of those friends, and of the mild and consolatory charms of philosophy.

It is then a fact which is only false to the malevolent, and to persecutors, that the *late* Abbé Bazin, is, thanks to heaven, alive and well in his mansion at Ferney, where, for the edification of the faithful, he has just composed the *Philosophy of History*. We have, at present, only the first part of it, and the nephew editor announces at the end, that the manuscript there breaks off; but he promises, if he ever finds a continuation of the work, that it shall be faithfully published for the honour of God and of his uncle. In this engagement I am confident he will be faithful, if a few months be granted him to pursue his researches.

The Philosophy of History!—How fine is the title, and how worthy the first writer of his age is

is such a subject!—But, notwithstanding, the great and sincere respect which I shall have to my life's end, for the late Abbé Bazin, austere truth, whose inflexible and august laws must on no account be ever infringed, compel me to acknowledge that the work appears in some parts dry, superficial, and not deeply reasoned;—to be in short unfinished. It is not enough for such a writer merely to remark upon the meagreness of M. Rollin, he should have entered more into particulars, shewn where and how he was faulty. It was not for one who professes himself a philosophical historian to treat superficially of those ancient nations so powerful, and so populous, who now only occupy a corner in our memories, after having for so many ages filled the world with their exploits, and the surface of the globe with their labours. A profound and enlightened retrospect should have been taken of their religion, of their arts, of their monuments, their manners, their prejudices, their traditions, their fables, in order to follow the traces of the human mind through all its turnings and windings, into its most remote and secret recesses. What a field for a philosopher to go over!—for, in truth, hitherto nothing satisfactory has been said upon the subject.

M. Bazin founds his *Philosophy of History* upon two grand principles, to which he refers all his observations, and all his reasonings. The first of these principles is the insufficiency of our know-

ledge, the absurdity of our chronologies; and hence results the idea of the world being of a much higher antiquity—an immeasurably higher antiquity than our monuments, and our calculations can possibly carry it. - His physical and historical reflections on this head lead directly to the idea of the eternity of the universe, and to some obvious conjectures, which result from it, with regard to our globe. The second principle appears to me less clearly demonstrated; it is that such a thing as a nation of idolaters never had any actual existence, and that the idea of one supreme God has in all times been common to all nations. He believes, in particular, that the secret of the initiated in the Eleusinian mysteries, and others of a similar kind, consisted in the adoration of one only God, the supreme Author of nature; that the people, though accustomed to the practices of a more gross worship, yet made a great difference between the Master of heaven and earth, and the inferior deities whom they had been taught to respect; as a good catholic does not regard the saints he invokes with the same veneration that he feels for the eternal God himself. This idea is philosophic, and perhaps true; but a much higher degree of evidence should have been brought in support of it.

It is not enough to have accused the late Abbé Bazin of being superficial, and of not having reflected deeply in some parts of his *Philosophy of*

History; when we attack a writer of this importance, we are bound to prove what we say, else the nephew editor and his partisans, who, without forming a body in the state, are sufficiently numerous, may accuse me, in my turn, of temerity, of a levity wholly unpardonable.

I would then represent to the nephew editor, and to all his partisans, among the warmest of whom I must number myself, that I cannot be satisfied with that part of the chapter upon the Romans, in which the author draws a parallel between them and the Greeks. It does not appear to me just to compare the Romans, yet gross and unpolished, with the Greeks, refined and long exercised in the arts of peace and war. To draw this parallel with any justice, the Romans, in the first ages of the republic, ought only to be compared with the Greeks at the time of the siege of Troy; the ages of Cicero and Augustus should alone be brought into comparison with that of Pericles.

I do not like to see the Abbé Bazin deny the story of Regulus, because Polybius does not speak of it. Nothing appears to me more natural and more easily explained than the silence of Polybius; nothing appears to me of greater weight than the testimony of the gravest and greatest personages of Rome; such as Cicero and others. The catastrophe of Regulus, besides, is not an event of the fabulous ages of Rome, and reasonings drawn

from the excess of the barbarity and atrocity of this punishment, are unfortunately by no means conclusive. On the same ground, two thousand years hence, some Bazin may perhaps take upon himself to disbelieve the punishment of Jean Calas, on account of the improbability that, in an age which produced the *Henriade* and *The Spirit of the Laws*, judges should have been found barbarous and fanatical enough thus in cold blood to assassinate the father of a family. This Bazin, if he possessed but a moderate share of talent, would demonstrate the almost moral impossibility of a fact which is nevertheless but too certain; he would, indeed, have much more plausibility on his side, than our late Abbé Bazin, since the latter cannot shew that the Carthaginians had a Voltaire and a Montesquieu among them, at the time when they inflicted such a cruel death upon Regulus. Strictly speaking, the execution of this illustrious Roman was less cruel than that of John Huss,—less cruel than many other actions, but too well attested in the history of our amiable race, and which were the offspring of ages much less barbarous than that of Regulus. We may remark in general, that the worst possible manner of reasoning with regard to history, is to deny facts which are not consistent with sound reason; we should be less liable to mistake were we to set out on a principle directly opposite, and admit as true, every thing that is in opposition to reason. In all matters of

religion, of manners, and even of legislation, the most absurd party is almost always that which prevails, while consecrated by the follies of some, and the rascality of others, time soon renders it unattackable. The late Abbé Bazin seems often to forget this principle.

He says, for example: "I am much astonished "ed to find Herodotus capable of asserting before "all Greece, in his first book, that all the Babylon- "ish women were obliged by the laws to prostitute "themselves at least once in a year in the temple "of Milita, or Venus, to all strangers that came "into the town. I am still more astonished that "in all histories compiled for the instruction of "youth this fable is still retained. It must have "been a charming kind of festival indeed, and "a curious species of devotion, that could lead "the principal ladies of the town to receive the "embraces, and that before the altars of their "gods themselves, of a parcel of camel drivers, "of dealers in horses, in oxen, and in asses. Is "it, in good truth, credible, that such an infamy "could ever enter into the heads of a civilized na- "tion?—is it possible that the magistrates of one "of the greatest cities on the globe could ever "have sanctioned such a custom?—is it possible "that husbands could ever have consented to "prostitute their wives, or fathers their daugh- "ters, to all the grooms of Asia?—What is wholly "out of nature cannot be true."

This is to reason very unphilosophically; it may sound plausible to say that *what is wholly out of nature cannot be true;* but unfortunately the most abominable customs imaginable have, by experience, been found not contrary to the nature of man. Let us preserve the reasoning of the Abbé Bazin, word for word, and apply it to the custom even more horrible, although incontestable, and at one period of the world pretty general, of sacrificing human victims, and we shall see how far it is conclusive. This contrast between the grooms of Asia, and the ladies of Babylon, who, under the pencil of our author, assume the character of our *petites-maîtresses* of Paris, is not very worthy of a philosopher, who ought to know that customs, barbarous in their origin, are often continued in more polished times, but with a refinement constantly increasing, in the same degree with the general refinement of the manners. The feet of the twelve apostles, in all probability, were much in the case of wanting to be washed, when our Lord humbled himself to performing this ceremony at the institution of the last supper. But when the Most Christian King imitates this great example of humility, the old men who represent the apostles have their feet well washed before they are touched by the royal hands.

In an age in which sound criticism appears to have thrown a new light upon every thing, I have never yet heard Herodotus judged quite

according to my ideas *. If the simplicity of his reasonings be ridiculed, it should be recollected, that his ideas were those of his age; and what a whole nation hears and believes without being revolted, ought never to be treated lightly by a philosopher, who would trace the history of the human mind. This philosopher would be yet more ill-advised in denying the facts related by Herodotus, because he could not find anything in his own head that explained them satisfactorily. Nothing is worthy of credit if the facts reported by Herodotus be not so. What historian ever took more pains to weigh and establish the truth? His history is the fruit of very extensive knowledge, acquired by long study and by long journeyings; his simplicity even adds great weight to his veracity. If we could ever find the true key to the customs and the facts which he relates, with the succession of changes and alterations to which every custom, every ceremony, has been subjected since its first establishment, we should have at length the true history of the human mind, and undoubtedly a very different one from that founded on the conjectures of philosophers.

The troubles excited at Geneva by the *Letters from the Mountains*, are at length appeased, partly by the publication of the *Popular Letters*, and still

* This has since been done by Larcher.

more by a letter from the Duke de Praslin to the French resident, which enjoins him to declare to the chiefs among the citizens, that since the king had a principal share in the *Mediation*, and was guarantee of the fundamental law known under that name, he would not suffer the least infringement of it; and that these same chiefs would be called to a strict account, if tranquillity was not immediately re-established. This little insinuation has quieted the humming in the hive, at least for a time. The *Popular Letters* are from M. Tronchin, attorney-general of the republic, and author of the *Letters from the Country*; they are written with all the sound reasoning, wisdom, and moderation which characterise the other writings of this magistrate. Although the greatest part of the work is devoted to discussing particular laws, established at Geneva, we find many general principles laid down, and an analysis of the *Social Contract*, which renders it worthy of the attention of philosophers.

While the *Letters from the Mountains* troubled the repose of the republic of Geneva, they at the same time endangered the safety of the author, in the principality of Neufchâtel. The consistories could not reconcile themselves to the christianity of Jean Jacques Rousseau; and but for the protection of the crowned philosopher,* the Christian exile would probably have lost his asylum there. But his Majesty, whose logic is of a very different

* The King of Prussia, Frederick the Great.

nature from that of priests, could not find in Rousseau's christianity any thing that would justify the disturbing his repose; and the Council of State at Neufchâtel have therefore decided, that it does not belong to the consistories to meddle in matters of faith.

June, 1765.

Alexis Claude Clairaut, a pensioner of the Royal Academy of Sciences, died the seventeenth of last month of a putrid fever, at the age of fifty-two. He was a very great geometrician, almost upon an equality with Euler, Fontaine, Bernouilli and d'Alembert. He had less genius than Fontaine, more justness and precision, and less penetration than d'Alembert. The latter has lost, by his death, a rival, who kept him constantly in exercise; and it is a great loss to him. Clairaut early obtained a very high reputation, and was admitted into the academy almost immediately upon his leaving college. He was preceptor to the celebrated Marchioness du Chastelet; and accompanied Maupertuis in his brilliant and useless voyage to the north. Maupertuis held out to him the hope of a considerable pension; and Clairaut, who liked exceedingly to be at his ease, yielded all the glory of the enterprize to him for money, which was paid by the court. He became rich; but Maupertuis was painted and engraved with a

bearskin cap on his head, and flattening the globe with his hand.

Clairaut had an agreeable countenance, with an air of candour and delicacy not often combined, but which assimilate so well together; his profile, sketched by M. de Carmontel, was engraved about two years ago. He loved pleasure and women exceedingly, and was a very great *gourmand*. The indigestions which he was continually heaping the one upon the other, seem to have contributed not a little to shortening his days. The repose of his latter years was thought, by his friends, to have been much affected by a violent passion which he had conceived for a lady, already, it might have been supposed, past the age of inspiring passion, and who could never, on her part, return more than esteem or friendship. Besides a pension of ten thousand livres from the Academy of Sciences, he enjoyed emoluments to the like amount from the royal bounty. The pension from the Academy ought, in the regular order of things, to go to M. d'Alembert, but it is not yet awarded to him. The Count de St. Florentin, in reply to the deputies of the Academy, who solicited it for him, said, that there were some difficulties about it, because his Majesty was not pleased with M. d'Alembert's writings. I do not think the latter will pass over, in silence, so marked an affront.

Clairaut was an honest man, a sincere friend,

one whose society never could be dangerous to any body: he was extremely fond of music. The study of the abstract sciences, though begun even in his earliest youth, and continued all his life with unwearied perseverance, did not detract from his serenity; he was gay and pleasant in society, and had always something to say, whatever turn the conversation might take. He enjoyed his fortune with his friends, and with a little housekeeper, who was very pretty, and to whom he had given lessons in geometry, that she might be able to assist him in his calculations. By his death, she is left wholly unprovided for; the suddenness of this event, after an illness of only four days, prevented his making any disposition of his property in her favour. Her destitute and forlorn situation occupies and interests all his literary friends. He was happy in witnessing that brilliant period of his favourite science, when all the most distinguished ladies, both of the court and the city, must have a geometrician in their train. He cultivated the science of calculation more particularly, and has applied it to problems of pure geometry, of mechanics, and of astronomy. His career was the same as that of M. d'Alembert; and though he might dispute the palm with him as a geometrician, he could never endure that the latter should distinguish himself as a man of letters; he could not allow him to read both Tacitus and Newton. If you ask me why Clairaut and d'Alembert hated each other, and why both, notwithstanding, kept

on good terms with Fontaine, it was, that the latter was altogether for carrying the science to perfection, while d'Alembert and Clairaut were content to work at it such as they found it. Fontaine is a mechanic, who seeks constantly to improve the construction of the plough, Clairaut and d'Alembert were contented to use it as it was.

The fashion of this plough is gone by, as we have seen the reigns of several other sciences successively commence and pass away. Metaphysicians and poets had their day; systematical physiology succeeded them, which afterwards gave place to experimental physiology; this was superseded by geometry, and next followed natural history and chemistry, which now divide the attention with the affairs of government, of commerce, of politics, and above all, with the agricultural mania:—what science the national levity will next bring into fashion it is difficult to guess. Every man in this country, whose talents are confined to one science alone, however transcendent they may be in that one, runs the hazard, if he live long, of seeing all his distinction vanish away like smoke, and of sinking, after having been for a while courted and admired by every body, into complete neglect. The prudent man supports his leading pursuit with several auxiliary ones, which serve to supply its place in case of a revolution. This was a matter which never struck Clairaut. Devoted wholly and entirely to his rhombs, his triangles, and parallelograms, since geometry has

ceased to be the rage, his former celebrity has been altogether annihilated; and he can scarcely now find a bookseller who will charge himself with his works, or a reader who will look into them. M. d'Alembert's little pamphlet upon the *Destruction of the Jesuits*, which is scarcely worth talking of, has created a greater sensation at Paris than all the scientific works he had published before, and which shewed a head of a very superior kind.

A pamphlet has just been printed in Holland, entitled, *The History of the Deliverance of the City of Toulouse on the seventeenth of May*, 1562; *in which will be seen the Conspiracy of the Huguenots against the Catholics, the Defeat of the Huguenots, and the Origin of the Procession of the seventeenth of May, with an enumeration of the Reliques in the Church of St. Sernin.—The whole extracted from the Annals of the said Town.*

This pamphlet first appeared at Toulouse in 1762, soon after the horrible execution of the unfortunate Calas, and near the time of the procession; it was published, apparently, in the laudable design of cherishing the fanaticism of the Catholics against the Protestants; — of feeding still farther that spirit which had been already but too much awakened by the execution of Calas. In the new edition of this work now printed, some notes are added to vindicate the Protestants from the atrocities which the author has so infamously

imputed to them. When we read such a collection of horrors and abominations, we cannot sufficiently admire the natural mildness and sweetness of the amiable human species.

Some months ago the Archbishop of Paris remitted to the Duke de Praslin a memorial, containing a list of complaints against the *Literary Gazette*, which is published under his auspices as minister. In this memorial, the authors of the gazette are reproached with having said that religious fanaticism is only dangerous in proportion to the opposition made to it;—that no inconvenience arises from the different sects in England;—that the Protestants were the part of the nation who shewed the most eagerness in forwarding the designs of M. Colbert;—that Mahomet was a great man. They are farther reproached with having insinuated that nothing was wanting to the works of our modern philosophers but to have been the production of some celebrated person of antiquity, to make people discover beauties even in their very defects; and with having maintained that population is the only real strength of a state. Of the same nature are all the impious, ill-sounding, and monstrous propositions with which the Archbishop reproaches the authors of the gazette. The memorial containing these accusations having been communicated to some of the faithful, a charitable soul, the Abbé Morellet, wrote a *Series of Obser-*

vations upon this Denunciation, which, making a pamphlet of sixty-three pages, has been printed in some heretical country; but, it is said, that the edition was confiscated on its arriving at Paris. It will, therefore, not be easy to procure a sight of these *Observations*. I have fortunately seen them, and though somewhat long, they appeared to me for the most part excellent, and full of moderation.

It is very common to say of a pleasant sally, of a very characteristic stroke or remark, that it is quite a thing to introduce in a comedy; yet I have almost uniformly seen these very comic traits hissed when any one has attempted to give them to the public under such a form. Is the exact copy of truth then devoid of attraction? and is it only the address of lying, with the greatest apparent degree of truth, precluding, however, the possibility of forgetting that it is lying, which forms the real charm of imitation?—Or is it of the very essence of a copyist, and of his gross and heavy touch, to wither whatever comes under it, and has the imitator alone, in creating an example after nature, the privilege of preserving to every thing its grace and spirit?—Both the one and the other may very possibly be the case. All the strokes in *Tom Jones*, with which M. Poinsinet regaled us last winter, are taken word for word from Fielding's exquisite novel; every body found

them charming in that work, but they were hissed when they came upon the stage. "What injustice!" exclaimed the unfortunate Poinsinet, who could not by any means comprehend this fancy of the public. He does not know that it is in the power of a dauber, by means of only two or three of his touches, to make, of a picture of Greuze, a sign for a tavern. On the other hand, the confidence of the fiction, established between the artist and his spectators, gives to the works of art that secret and relishing attraction which seduces and enchants: it is not the thing itself that they desire to see, but the power of imitation,—they wish to be shewn to how great and how happy an extent this power may be carried. If this were not so, the beautiful statue of Venus must be sent from the workshop of Praxiteles to that of Apelles, that the latter may give it the carnation, and the other lively colours of the Goddess of Beauty; for it cannot be denied, that a statue coloured is nearer to nature than a block of white marble, since this depends wholly upon the genius of the statuary for any resemblance that it bears to life.

The late Cahusac, before he was attacked with madness, had written a *Treatise upon Dancing*, in which there are some curious facts, a great deal of emphasis, and very few ideas. In this treatise, however, there is a passage which pleases me much, and of which I would gladly have been the author; he observes, "that we do

"well to perform our theatrical pieces by candle-"light, since this artificial light is in itself a be-"ginning of imitation." We do not expect or require truth, in the poet, the painter, the musician, the statuary, in any artist whatever, and when the flat and cold copyist would represent things only as they are, we find them awkward and condemn them. It is a delicate, refined, skilful fiction, that we seek in works of art; a fiction which establishes a secret communication of sentiments and ideas between us and the imitator, which proves to us that he has caught the original, the valuable side of the thing imitated. Thus, when we find judicious critics lay so much stress upon truth in the imitative arts, we must know how to attach its just value to this term. A man of an ordinary cast goes into a public-house, and sees nothing there but a parcel of peasants drinking. David Teniers goes in and sees a hundred original, humourous, and characteristic traits, to which he knows how to give their full value upon his canvas.

The truth of the imitation is not always sufficient to insure its success; we may be very true, and yet very insipid. The skilful artist will seek besides to acquire the science of what pleases, and which is often not only independent of truth, but absolutely contrary, and in opposition to it. This science is the fruit of a profound study of our nature, and it is the truth of imitation combined

with the experience of what pleases, that gives lasting success in the arts. Thus we have seen among all people who were in the least civilized, tragical representations, because it is in the nature of man to find something interesting in an affecting picture of the misfortunes of his species. But these magic scenes have always been mingled with comic ones, and with buffooneries, since it is equally the nature of man not to like to afflict himself for a long time together; real grief is only lasting because it is involuntary. Nothing is more contrary to the truth of imitation than this monstrous mixture of the serious with buffoonery, yet it has always succeeded in all nations, even in France, where the public taste is somewhat refined by the most severe reasonings. If tragic representations are here preserved pure, and free from any pollution with buffoonery, we still find it necessary to give a little farce afterwards; the painful impression made by Andromache or Rodogune must be somewhat weakened, and they who came to tremble and to weep must be made to laugh. I do not recollect to have read among all the compilers of the art of poetry, any thing which teaches this science, or puts us even into the right road for studying it. They think they have said every thing when they have strongly inculcated the imitation of nature; but I believe the other idea to be rich in new views, and to be that which will discover to us the true secret of works of art.

Happily, those who have the call of genius, are guided by an instinct which makes them discover the secret both of being natural and of pleasing, which is drawn from the study of men, and which dispenses with their going to school to the philosophers and critics.

M. Aufresne has commenced his theatrical career with the characters of Augustus, in the tragedy of *Cinna;* Dupuis, in the play of *Dupuis and Desronais;* and Zopirus, in the tragedy of *Mahomet.* Unfortunately, I have only been able to see him in the inferior character of Dupuis. Although I was not much pleased with his countenance, or delighted with his voice, he made me feel that he had the power of exciting the most lively emotions, of making his audience weep, shudder, exclaim, or be calm, at his pleasure. This actor has the most truly natural manner of playing that can be imagined; those who knew the celebrated Baron, say, that Aufresne recals him very much to their recollection. I am told that he played the character of Augustus in a manner truly sublime; but more applause was given him in Zopirus. I feel that he will make me once more passionately fond of tragedy, which I have never been able to endure in the manner that it is played at present. I feel also, that if his style of acting continues to be received with the same delight, our divine Clairons, and illustrious

le Kains, must return to the tone of nature; their drawling and emphatic declamation will cut but a sorry figure with the natural tones and manner of delivery of Aufresne. There are people who insist upon it, that he is cold; it is true, that our tragedians have of late invented the art of seeming to have fire, without shewing feeling, and that Aufresne, not having studied this fine art, only appears all feeling. Nothing is wanting to bring back the French theatre to the true tone of nature, from which it has, for some years past, deviated so cruelly, but to give him encouragement. It is said, however, that, notwithstanding his success, the terms offered him to remain at Paris are not sufficient, and that he is going to perform at the Hague. This attention to the public, in depriving them of the talents of those who have nearly every voice in their favour, is extremely obliging, and cannot fail of exciting the warmest gratitude.

The true name of this actor is Rival; he is the son of a watchmaker at Geneva, and, in his quality of citizen of that town, a heretic; a principal obstacle, as report says, to his being engaged here. Curious, to want that he should turn catholic only to be excommunicated with the rest of his fraternity. Rival has gone upon the stage totally against the approbation of his parents; but he could never resist the passion which he had for the art, and, indeed, he seems born for it. He has become what he is without any master, without

any model, in a miserable provincial company, where there was probably not a single performer capable of appreciating his value.

July, 1765.

I cannot help preserving here a letter written from Switzerland, which I am assured is genuine. Indeed there is no occasion for any very strenuous assurances on this subject; there is a simplicity, a *naïveté*, a turn in the letter, which could not be invented. In favour of these you must excuse one term used, which is not suited to polite ears, but which could not be changed without injuring the simplicity of the style.

Letter from a woman to her husband, a soldier in the regiment of Lochmann.

" My dear heart, I cannot refrain from giving you the information that I am, thank God, well and hearty. I shall be very happy to learn the same news of thee. I hope all goes well with thee; every thing goes on well in this house, except that thy brothers vex and teaze me; therefore I wish you would get leave of absence from your captain and come home. Thy brothers have wicked tongues, and treat me neither more nor less than as if I were a w——. In hopes of seeing thee soon, I am thy faithful

" Anne Margaret.

" P. S. I ought to tell you, but I hardly

dare, though I hope it won't vex you much, that I got a little too near our neighbour George, and by that means it happens that I am with child. I shall certainly take as much care of the child as if it were your own; make haste and come that you may be here by the christening, and make me an honest woman. You may do this very well, and am I not always your dear Margaret?—besides, you know that if you had been at home this would never have happened."

After many doubts and hesitations it is at length decided, that M. Aufresne is to be received into the King's company of players, and he continues to perform with the most brilliant success. I have already observed that the countenance and voice of this actor are not particularly interesting; his voice is sonorous and his enunciation is clear, but sometimes harsh; he has not much variety in his tones, and little flexibility in his throat. There is something of dryness in his action; or, to sum up all in a few words, he is deficient in grace, alike in his play, in his voice, and in his countenance. This sometimes renders his delivery cold, and in pathetic passages gives him an apostolical tone and air. But if there be a secret which can supply the want of grace, or compensate it, Aufresne possesses this secret in an eminent degree. He discriminates his character with so much truth and justness, he seems to feel it so forcibly; there are flashes of

genius so precious and of such extreme truth; he reasons and converses so admirably, that he enchants and subdues every heart. If nature had well seconded such rare talents, Aufresne would be a Baron, a Garrick, a Roscius, a god. Whatever we may find occasionally deficient in his play, he never appears upon the stage without atoning for all that nature has denied him, by three or four flashes of such sublimity, that they are worth all the even, smooth-flowing merits of other performers, sustained unvaryingly through the piece. Aufresne will always be the actor of those who have the most refined tastes, who in their opinions upon matters of art, combine extreme accuracy of judgment with exquisite delicacy of feeling. It is a great subject of regret to me, that Aufresne did not make his *debut* two months ago; it would then have been made under the eyes of the celebrated Garrick, and I cannot be persuaded but that the latter would have found the *debutant* worthy of his counsels, and that the *debutant* would have listened to them gladly, and profited by them.

The above named illustrious actor, the English Roscius, or rather the Roscius of modern days, for talents such as his are not of any one particular country, they belong to the world at large, at least to those of all countries who know how duly to appreciate them;—this David Garrick, in one word, was faithful to his promise, and spent six months with us, after having run over

Italy; he has been returned to England about three months. He would have been ungrateful if he had not felt some regret at leaving France, where he experienced the most flattering reception; he confined himself principally, during his stay, to the society of the philosophers, in whose manners, whose knowledge, and whose attainments he found infinite delight, and who on their side regret the loss of him exceedingly. I ask pardon of the English, but I have in general thought that they exaggerate their advantages beyond all bounds, and extol their men of talents far beyond their deserts, setting them up above every thing of merit and talents in other nations. In the present instance, I have, for the first time, found no exaggeration; Garrick cannot be too much extolled: one must see him to form any idea of his merits as a man; one must see his acting to have a true idea of what good acting is.

He is the first, and the only man that ever realized the ideas I have always conceived in my imagination, of all that was requisite to form a complete actor; and he has demonstrated to me that the ideas we have formed of the perfection to which his art might be carried, are not altogether visionary, as some people with very narrow capacities would persuade us: there are no bounds to be set to true genius.

Garrick's great art consists in alienating his mind perfectly from himself, and throwing himself

completely into the situation of the fictitious personage he represents, so that for the time he ceases to be Garrick, and may almost be said to be really the person he seems to be. Thus, as he assumes any character, he becomes so different from himself, that any one would think he had really changed his features and countenance, and would scarcely be able to persuade themselves that he was the same man. It is easy to disfigure a countenance, that we can readily conceive, but Garrick is a stranger to grimace; all the changes in his countenance arise from the manner in which he is affected internally; he never goes beyond truth; and he is perfect master of that other incomprehensible secret, how to embellish truth without any other assistance than that of passion. We saw him play the dagger scene in Macbeth, in a room, and only in his usual dress, destitute of all theatrical illusion; but as he followed with his eyes the dagger suspended in the air and leading him along his way, his face assumed so fine an expression, that he drew a general cry of admiration from every body present. Who would have thought it possible for this same man, a moment after, to imitate, with equal perfection, a poor little pastry-cook's boy, carrying on his head a basket of pies to sell, and gaping about in the air till he let his pies fall into the kennel, when at first he was wholly stupified by the accident, and ended by

bursting into a fit of crying. Nothing could be well more remote than the physiognomy of these two characters, yet it was difficult to say which was the most perfect of its kind; and this great actor can assume, with the same perfection, any character that has a model in nature. The only parts he does not play well, are those fictitious ones which resemble nothing that ever really existed, and had their origin only in the meagre and ill-regulated imagination of the poet. He asserts that it is impossible to be a truly good tragic actor, without being also a comic one, and I believe him to be in the right; but if this be so, he has pronounced a terrible sentence against all our tragic actors, and among others his good friend and favourite Mademoiselle Clairon. She never could play a comic character of any sort or kind in a manner that was endurable.

M. de Carmontel has made a drawing of Garrick in a tragic attitude, and opposite to it has placed a comic Garrick, between two folding doors, coming and surprising the tragic Garrick, and laughing at him. I wish much that the drawing was engraved. While he was sitting for this drawing, his natural restlessness will not permit him to be still for a moment, he exercised his talents in passing alternately, by almost imperceptible shadings, from extreme joy to extreme sadness, nay, even to terror and despair. This may be

called the gamut of the player; for why should there not be a gamut of passions, as well as of successive sounds.

Garrick is of a middling stature, rather short than tall. His countenance is agreeable and full of intellect; and he has the utmost variety of expression in his eyes. His vivacity is astonishing; he has great wit, with great refinement, and great justness in his ideas; he is by nature a mimic, and can imitate whatever he pleases; he gives a peculiar grace to every thing he does. He has improved great natural talents by a profound study of nature, and by researches full of genius and sublimity. With this view he always goes wherever a crowd is likely to be collected together, and there seizes those strokes which are always to be found on such occasions, in their genuine simplicity and originality. One day returning on horseback with Preville from the *Bois de Boulogne*, he said to him, "I will now imitate a drunken man, do "you do the same." In this way did they pass through the village of Passy without speaking a word, and in an instant the whole village were out at their doors to gape at them. The young people laughed at and bantered them, the women screamed, expecting to see them fall from their horses, the old men shrugged their shoulders and shook their heads, or, according to their dispositions, took pains to stifle a laugh. When they quitted the village, Preville said to Garrick, "Have I per-

"formed to your satisfaction, my good master?" —"Yes, yes, very well upon the whole," said Garrick, "but you were not drunk in the legs." This single remark is sufficient to shew how very closely he must observe nature.

He learned one day that a man in Ireland, in playing with his child, had the misfortune to let it fall out at the window, when it was dashed to pieces with the fall. The wretched father lost his speech instantly and became mad, so that it was necessary he should be confined. Garrick went to see him some years after the accident; never did I see any thing more dreadful than his situation;—I say, never did I *see* any thing more dreadful, for Garrick imitated him in a manner to make every body that saw him recoil with terror.

This extraordinary man is the author of several pieces, but they are said not to be above mediocrity. He is a great admirer of Shakespeare, and cannot pardon the slighting manner in which Voltaire speaks of him in his *Appeal to Nations*, and in his *Commentaries upon Corneille*, after having justly extolled him in his *Letters upon the English Nation*. It must be acknowledged, that M. de Voltaire's late criticisms upon this celebrated English dramatist, do no credit to his taste or his sincerity; whatever may be said, Shakespeare must always be considered as a great and sublime genius. In fact, if the fine scene of Lusignan in *Zaïre*, were translated in the manner that the

scenes of the *Death of Cæsar* are in M. de Voltaire's *Commentaries upon Corneille*, that might be made to appear equally ridiculous; a man of real taste will, however, feel the beauties of the original even under the disguise of the blank verse in which it is clothed. This injustice does not prevent Garrick's considering M. de Voltaire as the greatest tragic poet France has ever had; he says that Racine, so fine, so delightful to be read, cannot be played, because he says every thing, and leaves nothing to the actor; besides, the harmony of Racine's versification requires a singing in reciting them, very much in opposition to the true tone of declamation. On all these points we have agreed with him perfectly well; we, who are a little groupe of true believers, acknowledging Homer, Eschylus, and Sophocles, as the law and the prophets, intoxicating ourselves with the effusions of genius wherever they are to be found, without exception of any age or nation. The English Roscius is of the religion and church of this little knot of chosen spirits.

Garrick possesses an ample fortune; he is considered as loving money very much. He has, in private fortune, as much as would make an annual income of sixty thousand livres, French money, besides the revenue arising from the principal theatre in London, of which he is the director. Our people of talents do not make equal fortunes. In returning from Italy, by the Tyrol, he was

attacked at Munich by a malignant fever, which it was much apprehended would have brought him to the grave; the air of Paris, and the pleasure he seemed to experience in his stay here, perfectly restored him. I doubt, however, whether he will be able to continue acting for a long time. The great exertion of entering into a character to the degree that he does, must undermine the strongest constitution; and he does not appear a strong man. Master of an ample fortune, renowned all over Europe, cherished and esteemed by his fellow countrymen, he may retire whenever he pleases, to a very pleasant country house, which he has in the neighbourhood of London. He married, about seventeen years ago, a German lady, a native of Vienna, and a catholic, by whom he has no children. She has accompanied him in his travels. We have insisted upon it, that he was by nature jealous, and he has not contradicted this opinion.

Charles Vanloo, first painter to the king, a knight of the order of St. Michael, Director of the Royal Academy of Painting, is just dead of the consequences of an appoplexy at the age of sixty years. He had been at the Italian opera only the evening before. We have experienced great losses of late among our celebrated men, and this is an addition to them; it is to be hoped, that the mortality will not continue. Twelve or fifteen

men of talents, in various ways, lost to the nation, will make a painful gap, and will have an important influence on the reputation of France; the glory of a people, and of an age, is always the work of a small number of great men, and disappears with them. The academy of painting has lost, in the space of six months, its two greatest artists, Vanloo and Deshays; these are losses not easily to be repaired. Charles Vanloo was not only the first painter to the king, but also to the nation, and had some reputation in foreign countries. His works are scattered about in churches, and in private collections. The Augustines in the *Place des Victoires*, have a series of paintings by them of the life of Saint Augustine, which ornament the choir of their church. Madame Geoffrin has several easel-pieces of his which are of great value. One called *Conversation*, was prodigiously admired when it was first painted, and has always sustained a high reputation; that called *Reading*, was thought much inferior to it. Madame Geoffrin, at that time, was the great censor of his works, and very laughable scenes often passed between them. Seldom agreed either in their ideas, or in the manner of executing them, they disputed, they quarrelled, they were friends again, they laughed, they wept, they abused each other, they complimented each other, and it was amidst all these vicissitudes, that the painting was carried on and concluded.

Nobody afforded a better illustration than Vanloo of the great difference there is between genius and understanding. It was impossible to deny that he had great professional talents, but he was in many respects a very poor creature, and it was even ridiculous to hear him talk on the subject of painting. But, I must own, I would very much prefer an artist who paints good pictures to one who only talks well upon his art; praters are seldom good for much. Vanloo suffered exceedingly from them. Any miserable dauber, who had confidence enough to put forth his absurd ebullitions, could, by a stupid criticism, make him spoil the best picture; he has ruined more than one by attending to remarks that had not an atom of common sense in them. Oftentimes, from making these frequent changes, he grew tired of the thing, and finished by putting out of his hands a very vile composition, after having begun by making an excellent one. He married, at Turin, a sister of Lomis, the celebrated violin player of his time. She was herself an excellent musician, and sung very agreeably. She is left nearly destitute, but will doubtless obtain a pension from the king. She had a daughter, who was very handsome, but who is dead, and two sons, who, far from being persons of talent, are young men of but very indifferent character.

It is perfectly decided that I will some day

mount the rostrum of truth, and after having summoned around me all the philosophers I can collect together, will address the following sermon to them:

"*Nolite Clamare!*

"Of what do you complain?—Is there a place on earth where you are refused the proofs of your mission, and denied the honours attached to it?—Are you not sufficiently hated, calumniated, persecuted?—What would you more?—You expect rewards which are not to be obtained but with difficulty, and that only by mediocrity;—this is your first stumbling-block. You expect that gratitude which your age does not owe you;—this is your second stumbling-block.—*Ave Maria.*

"FIRST PART.—'Tis the right of mediocrity to be protected, praised, extolled, loaded with rewards; 'tis the right of eminent merit to excite envy and jealousy,—only to obtain the distinctions due to it by struggles and contests. *Nolite Clamare.* Of what do you complain?

"You, Francis Mary de Voltaire, have you not experienced from your contemporaries thirty years of injustice and ingratitude? Have not your follies, which were hurtful only to yourself, been for ever talked of and cited, to diminish the value of your works, which are calculated to form and instruct the understandings and the taste of other nations, while they extend the glory of your own? Can you reproach us with having enrolled you

among the forty members of the Academy, after you had written your *Œdipus*, your *Brutus*, your *Alzira*, your *Henriade?* Have you a single leaf of laurel round your head that you have not snatched in spite of us; and was not that head grey when the favour was granted of calling you brother to the Abbé Batteux and to Archdeacon Trublet?

"You, Denis Diderot, can you reproach us with having found more than a dozen persons in France who do justice to your genius and virtues? —and but for the august and generous Catherine should we not have seen the philosopher obliged to sell his library in order to fulfil his duties as the father of a family?

"For you, M. Thomas, I allow that you have some right to complain; hitherto you have met with nothing but success; that is mortifying, and if you begin to have some doubts of the reality of your mission I should not be surprized. But have patience for a moment. Let your poem of *Peter the Great* be grand and sublime, and I promise that you will not have made the apology of philosophy with impunity.

"If you have not been more persecuted, generous defender of humanity, tender and amiable Beccaria, ascribe it only to a chance single in its kind, and impossible to be foreseen. Ah! who could guess that a princess would put at the head of the government of Milan a statesman, an en-

lightened and indulgent philosopher, a Count of Firmian?—I say to you all *Nolite clamare!* Of what do you complain?

"SECOND PART. You expect a gratitude which your age does not owe you. Who could teach you that an age owes any thing to its philosophers?—it is not for your own age that you labour. If your labours be really useful to human nature it is not during your own lives; one revolving century must at least pass before a new idea, an useful truth, can lodge itself completely in men's heads, can germinate there, and arrive at that degree of maturity which will admit of its bearing fruit. *Nolite clamare.* Wait a while, and if in a century or two you have not obtained justice, if your name be not inscribed upon the list of benefactors to the human species, it will be very allowable for you to complain. But who told you that to attack opinions commonly received, that to strike at prejudices, that to offend fools, that to incommode cheats, that to wound mediocrity, that to excite envy by dint of talents, was a trade in which any thing was to be gained?—Where have you seen men quit their ideas, their principles, their prejudices, their absurdities, in an instant; and at what time has truth or error made proselytes suddenly and without difficulty, unless by the aid of force?—Nature does nothing suddenly; grain must germinate in the earth, ideas must ripen in the head. It is in the nature of man at the

same time to love novelty and to set himself pertinaciously against it.—Since you have not sown for us, do not exact acknowledgments which you have no right to expect but from our descendants in the second or third generation, when the harvest shall be ripened for them to gather it in. While waiting for the period of your canonization, allow us at least some little credit for permitting you to walk unmolested in the streets, without throwing stones at you; or rather quarrel with that fatal softening in our manners which abstains from making an *auto-da-fé* of you with your books. So be it.—*Nolite clamare.* Of what do you complain? —*Amen.*"

The subscription for the print of the unfortunate Calas Family was received by the public with that warmth and interest which is the natural result of true compassion and humanity. But the fate which it has experienced at Paris will appear incredible, even to those who are best acquainted with the fury of fanaticism. Scarcely was this project for a subscription, which was sanctioned by the approbation and seal of the police, and favoured by the most illustrious names in France, made public, than some counsellors of the parliament were pleased to take offence, and required the lieutenant of the police to suspend the permission given for it. One of the first magistrates of the kingdom has given the three following reasons for the necessity of this suspension.

1st. Because M. de Voltaire seems to have been the person who originally planned the subscription.

2d. Because the print is a monument injurious to the parliament of Toulouse.

3d. Because it would be doing good to Protestants.

One must not permit oneself to make any commentaries upon such reasons; since it is evident from them that these gentlemen wish to preserve to themselves the right of breaking innocent men upon the wheel. But it is not the less incomprehensible that they dare hinder the nation's following the example of benevolence set by the King; and, that in order to avoid giving offence to seven or eight guilty judges, they should deprive innocent people, who have been treated with the utmost cruelty, of an aid they so much want;—innocent people moreover to whom, at the requisition of his Majesty himself, justice has been done, through a supreme judgment given by near a hundred judges, after a most rigorous investigation of the matter. They have not been able to put this inhibition into any regular form, either judiciary or extrajudiciary; for under what tolerably fair pretence could people hinder the publication of a print for which the King himself had granted a licence, by which all persons are forbidden to interrupt Madame Calas in the sale of it, and she is permitted to sell it in any way that she may think

most for her own advantage? Such a proceeding is, therefore, nothing but an arbitrary piece of violence, which cannot be justified by any law,—and it is the magistracy who suffer themselves to be guilty of this violence!—If this be the spirit of the fathers of the country, may we not well lift up our hands and exclaim that the fate of the country is indeed deplorable? It is said, however, that means will be found to take off the inhibition; but those who can have been so devoid of shame as not to hesitate in taking a step of such atrocity, will know well how to support it. This alone was wanting to complete the outrages which have been experienced by this unfortunate family. The parliament of Toulouse has always continued to persecute them in every way within their power. After the supreme decision, a revision of the proceedings against the murdered father was ordered. All the forms of law having been violated in these proceedings, the new reporter concluded that there was no ground for breaking Jean Calas on the wheel. Upon this the parliament, instead of making any apology in extenuation of its conduct, decreed that a sovereign court is not bound to assign motives for its decisions. In consequence of this principle it would not acknowledge the supreme judgment, no erasure of the sentence has been made, nor has any man of law, or officer of the courts of justice, been yet found who would take upon himself to signify officially to the par-

liament of Toulouse, the decision of the supreme court.

To divert our minds somewhat from the melancholy reflections which these facts inspire, I will relate a fact which I had the happiness of witnessing myself. On the day before that, when the inhibition against the subscription was published, one Andrew Souhart, a master mason, came to a notary who was appointed to receive subscriptions, and enquired whether that was the place to subscribe for Madame Calas. On being answered in the affirmative: "I would," said he, "that I "had forty thousand livres a year, to share them "with this unfortunate woman! but I have no-"thing but my labour to support me, and have "seven children to maintain. Put my name down "as a subscriber, here is my half-crown." O, Souhart! never shall I forget this sublime apostrophe, or the tone and air with which it was pronounced by you! nor shall I ever think of it without tears starting into my eyes.

The Abbé de la Chapelle, known by his *Elements of Geometry*, and other works, and who has long been a teacher of mathematics at Paris, has laid before the Royal Academy of Sciences a sort of jacket, or doublet, of his own invention, by means of which a person may be supported in the water, and consequently be preserved from any danger of being drowned. The

Academy having named commissioners to examine the construction of this doublet, and make an experiment of its efficacy, M. de la Chapelle desired to undertake the exhibition of it himself, and did so with the most complete success. He threw himself into the Seine with his doublet on, in the presence of his academical judges, at Bercy, a little above Paris, where he supported himself in all sorts of positions, always having his head and arms above the water, with the latter perfectly at liberty to do whatever he wished, eating, drinking, firing off a gun and a pistol;—in short, he seemed as much at home as if he had been a fish. This is the good side of the medal; but since I see fresh water still put on board all vessels when they go to sea, notwithstanding that M. Poissonnier discovered three years ago the secret of depriving the sea-water of its saltness in a very convenient and desirable manner;—since I see people who have lost an arm walk about without one, although M. Laurent invented some years ago an artificial arm, which might be made to supply nearly all the functions of the natural one;—since I see these things, I wait till M. de la Chapelle's doublet shall have become a thing in common use, before I celebrate the great importance of the invention.

September, 1765.

The arts have just experienced a heavy loss

in the death of the Count de Caylus, a Member of the Royal Academy of Inscriptions and Belles-Lettres, and honorary Member of the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture. He died at the age of sixty-three, after a long and painful illness. It was said of him with great justice, that he was the protector of the arts, and the torment of artists; for though he encouraged the latter, and even assisted them with his purse, he exacted in return a blind deference to his opinions, and having begun by acting the part of their benefactor, he often ended in acting that of their tyrant. Any difficulties, however, that the artist had to encounter from his temper, were overbalanced by the advantages which the arts derived from his patronage. He enjoyed an income of at least sixty thousand livres a year, not more than ten thousand of which were ever devoted to his own personal expences. He wore a drab coat with brass buttons, worsted stockings, thick clumsy shoes, and a large hat upon his head. Such was his usual costume, certainly not a ruinous one. A job carriage which he hired was the most expensive article of his establishment; the rest of his fortune was employed in doing good and encouraging talents. Was a young man introduced to him who evinced good abilities, but who was in want of bread, as befits a votary of the muses, the Count placed him as a pupil under some good master in the Academy,

paid for his board, lodging, and instruction, presided himself over his education, and was in every respect a father to him. The public are indebted to him for having brought forward in this way the talents of Vassé, and several other young artists of the Academy of Painting and Sculpture.

The extreme simplicity of Count de Caylus's dress was considered by the world as an affectation of singularity. They said that not having embraced the profession of arms, which his birth and situation demanded, he could not aspire to the decorations of military honours, and he therefore endeavoured to distinguish himself by an appearance and manners totally opposite to those of the court or people of fashion. Perhaps there was some truth in this observation, though the Count was not himself sensible of the motives by which he was secretly actuated. What was yet more singular in a man entirely devoted to study, and passionately fond of the arts, was that his manners were harsh and rustic, though he had a great deal of real kindness of heart. Nor was it less surprising, considering the refinement of his taste, that his countenance did not express either sensibility or feeling; he wrote ill, in a style wholly devoid of elegance or fancy. He always recommended earnestly to the Academy of Painting and Sculpture the study of the antique; in the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles Lettres, he applied himself particularly to the study of Egypt-

ian antiquities, and he has published several works upon them which are replete with learning and curious investigation. He was the particular friend of Bouchardon and Charles Vanloo; the latter he has followed to the tomb within a very short time.

The Count de Caylus had a decided aversion to physicians and priests, and he died without falling into the hands of either. While his uncle, the celebrated Bishop of Auxerre, was still alive, he was attacked with a dangerous illness. This prelate and all his relations being collected around his bed, they ardently sought an opportunity to propose his receiving the sacraments. "I "see perfectly well," said the invalid, addressing himself to them, "that you are anxious to recom- "mend my paying some attention to the good of "my soul." They were all much delighted at hearing him speak thus, hoping he was in the temper of mind which they earnestly wished. Their joy was, however, soon damped by his adding: "But I am now going to tell you a secret, "which is, that I have not a soul."—The bishop and all present turned away as if struck with horror, blessing and crossing themselves repeatedly. The invalid, notwithstanding, continued to assure them, that he had no soul, and that he must know better than any other person, whether he had or not. In the course of his last illness, instead of endeavouring to amend the state of his blood, by a light and wholesome diet, he would

not make any change whatever, but continued to eat as much as usual, and that of the most pernicious kinds of food, till at length his blood became an entire mass of corruption. As he absolutely despised pain, and disease could not at once subdue a constitution remarkably strong and vigorous, he went out as long as he was able to stir; nor could he pardon those friends who endeavoured to make him sensible of the real state of his health. On the eve of his death, while in a high fever, and perfectly delirious, he would go out in his carriage; but at his return he immediately went to bed, never to rise more. Such a determined resistance to his disease, was made with no other view than to avert the being troubled with the attendance of priests, and the officious offers of their services.

The rector of his parish, whose name was Chapeau, having visited him the day before his death, when his illness was arrived at a height which detained him at home in spite of himself, he said to him, "I understand you, sir, but you may "save yourself the trouble of coming to see me "again. The weather is bad, and I promise you "not to go out from hence without a *hat*."* He kept his word; for after his death Mr. Chapeau was obliged to come and attend him to the grave.

The Count has bequeathed his whole property to his nearest relation, the Marquis de Lignerac,

* A play upon the rector's name, *Chapeau*.

with the exception of his cabinet, and some other trifling legacies. His cabinet is left to the king. He has ordered, that if his heirs should be seized with the fancy of erecting a monument to his memory, it shall be only an Etruscan urn, which haslong ornamented his garden, on which his name shall be engraved, with merely these words: "Of the Royal Academy of Inscriptions and "Belles Lettres." He adds, that he finds nothing in the customs of religion which can oppose the execution of such a project.

Would you wish to know why we have not had any comedies written since those of Molière; and why this great man owed every thing to his genius, and nothing to the age in which he lived? —the reason is, that our trifling and frivolous manners form an insurmountable obstacle to sketching any thing like truth of character; and that their refinement, which increases daily in proportion to the general corruption, contracts, in the same proportion, the career of dramatic writing. In Cibber's English comedy of the *Careless Husband*, when the curtain draws up, it discovers the husband asleep on a sofa by the side of his wife's waiting-woman, who is also asleep, with her bosom uncovered, and her whole dress extremely disordered. The wife enters,—she stands for a moment, lost in astonishment, and then taking the handkerchief from her own neck, covers that of her woman and

retires. The husband awakes, perceives his wife's handkerchief, which he immediately recognises, and remains thunderstruck; the waiting-woman wishes to pass the circumstance off with a joke, which is perfectly natural in a creature of her description, but at this the husband is offended. Thus does the intrigue of the piece begin; and this is true comedy: the picture is spirited, and may even be called full of taste.

I cannot wholly approve of the irregularity of English dramatic pieces, but if their truth could be combined with French regularity, we should then have perfect comedy. We dare not exhibit on the stage persons of any particular profession, excepting physicians and attornies; for you must be aware that the indefinite character of a coxcomb or a beau, can never represent with accuracy the manners of a courtier, a man of fashion, or a dignitary of the law. Let a man arise with the genius of Molière, let him write a comedy, in which a counsellor of parliament shall be faithfully represented, and then you will see that the public disposition at present is not favourable to the relishing true comedy. In fact, this is a species of writing that will never exist in France: but it is not by the honest and enlightened class of the community that it will be opposed. They feel no dread of the most unbounded freedom in writing; they know that they are not themselves in any danger from it, and that is sufficient to tranquillize

their minds upon the subject. It is the rogues who persuade the fools that all would be lost if they were to allow liberty to the press or the stage; and they have good reasons for inculcating this principle. The fact is too well established to be disputed, that if you see a nation industrious to multiply the shackles of the stage and the press,—if you hear them at every moment assert, that satire is a scourge which cannot be too much or too strongly repressed, you may be assured that the morals of this nation are very much relaxed, that it is almost without morals;—you may depend upon it that works of art and genius cannot arrive there at any degree of strength or vigour.

The Tartuffe is the work of one of the greatest, of one of the sublimest geniuses that has arisen among the moderns; and yet see how much art the poet has been obliged to exert in order to soften down the principal character, and render it fit for representation. If Molière had dared to make of his Tartuffe a priest who, in quality of a director of consciences had gained the power of domineering over the minds of both the husband and wife, interfering in all their domestic concerns, causing the son to be disinherited, and the daughter to be sent to a convent, while under the mask of the mysticisms of religion he seduced the wife;—succeeding in all these infamous designs, and arriving at dignities, while this unfortunate family were utterly ruined by him,—if, so far from meeting,

against all probability, with the punishment which his crimes deserved, as we see him now in consequence of the sickly state of our dramatic system; —if, instead of this, the impostor had been seen to triumph insolently over the weakness of his dupes, too late aware of his true character, then the Tartuffe would be indeed a work of the highest importance; would be a great public lesson, worthy to be held up for the instruction of, and for a warning to, an enlightened nation,—our daughters would then be fully aware of the arts and intrigues employed by an impostor to seduce the wife of his benefactor? Yes, if you were deserving of the lesson I propose, the virtue of your children would not be founded on their ignorance of the great ends of nature in creating a difference of sexes, you would not any longer endeavour to cherish and protract this state of ignorance, till it can never be abandoned without the utmost danger;—you would renounce a system fatal to good morals, and which is become, among cold and devout calculators, a source of the most fatal wickedness and libertinism.

Though among the follies and foibles of Jean Jacques Rousseau, a principal one is the desire of not being thought a philosopher, the clergy, much against his will, confer on him the honours of that appellation, and treat him accordingly. Among our latest news from Neufchâtel, we learn that the pastor

Montmollin, his good friend, who admitted him two years ago to the holy communion, has now instigated his parishioners to drive him with stones from Moëtier-Travers. Poor Jean Jacques has retired to the canton of Berne, notwithstanding the decree which subsists there against him, and it is confidently said that if he will remain quiet, the government will not take any measures against him. A drawing has been handed about representing his departure from Moëtier-Travers, on the fore ground of which he appears dressed as an Armenian, giving charity to the poor; whilst the pastor Montmollin exhorts his parishioners to throw stones at him. As this picture contains a fine moral, we shall endeavour to have it engraved with this simple and natural inscription underneath. *The pastor Montmollin exhorting his parishioners to throw stones at Jean Jacques Rousseau, who is giving alms to the poor.*

A young man by name Gudin, the son of a watchmaker at Paris, and a Protestant, a few days ago read us two cantos of an epic poem in the style of Ariosto, which reminded me of M. de Voltaire's manner more than any thing I ever heard. The work appears to me full of originality, of fine taste, and of poetical imagery; the versification, as far as one can judge from having heard it rapidly read in a numerous circle, is elegant. The poem opens with a knight errant, who

is full of the most lofty notions of the virtue of women, meeting in a forest another black knight, sad and melancholy as darkness itself, standing by a tomb, and crying aloud to all who approach him, that there is no such thing to be found in the world as an honest woman. The first knight challenges him to a combat upon this question, when a third knight appears, who separates the combatants, and engages them to make him the umpire in their dispute. It now appears that the black knight had travelled over a great part of the world; that wherever he had gone he had been deceived by the women; and in the last instance, at Rome, he surprised his mistress with a man, whom in the first transports of passion he stabbed, and whom he afterwards discovered to be his best friend. It is the ashes of this friend, who has injured him so cruelly, that repose in the tomb. The knights all agree that the case is a very lamentable one; but he who separated the champions, says that it is not right to condemn all the sex for the faults of this one; that there are women whose virtue is superior to all attacks; he has himself, he adds, the happiness of possessing a mistress whose heart is entirely his, and has never been another's. No sooner, however, does he name her, than the first knight exclaims that what he says is false, for the person he has mentioned is his mistress, and a model of virtue superior to all suspicion. The black knight interposes in the mean time, and asserts that the woman they had

named is the very same who had been unfaithful to him, and whose falsehood had made him the murderer of his dearest friend. All this is told in a very lively and pleasant manner. The three knights make peace, and quitting the forest, enter a garden, where, in a thicket, they surprise their beautiful fair in the arms of a Mussulman, who swears by Allah that he never possessed a more charming creature.

I do not know whether M. Gudin will ever succeed in arranging a regular plan, and forming an interesting fable, or will be happy in the choice of his subject, but if he should, it appears to me that he has powers of execution which would produce a poem superior to *La Pucelle*. He has all the grace and fire of the author of Joan of Arc, with much more originality and invention. They are both somewhat too warm in their descriptions, but that is the fault and privilege of this species of writing.

November, 1765.

It appears that the first accounts brought of the ill treatment which Jean Jacques Rousseau experienced in the village of Moëtier Travers were greatly exaggerated, and that the parity of his fate with that of the first martyr Saint Stephen is not very well established. If we may trust to the reports made in consequence of the inquiry into the affair instituted by government, the whole

matter is reduced to some pebbles having been thrown in at the windows of Rousseau's house by a parcel of drunken men, who had by chance assembled about it, without any particular view whatever. A person with an ardent imagination may easily transform a few small pebbles into a shower of large stones, and half a dozen drunken men into a troop of assassins. Poor Jean Jacques was, for other reasons, too uncomfortable at Moëtier Travers to remain there. If there had been no other penance to which he was obliged to submit, than constantly attending during three successive years the sermons of his pastor Montmollin, and this he had done regularly, here was sufficient to render his stay there a hell upon earth to him. It seems that the *ennui* resulting from a continued attention to this duty, united with the impossibility of always concealing it, and evincing great esteem and regard for a fool with whom he was in the habits of a daily intercourse, occasioned the first coolness between Rousseau and his stupid pastor; and the discontent of M. de Montmollin, which had long been smothering, broke out at length on the appearance of the *Letters from the Mountains*.

The details of all these embranglements will be found in a letter from Goa, written by a partisan of Rousseau, M. du Perroux by name, one of the richest citizens of Neufchâtel. This letter, tediously and heavily written, has been reprinted,

with a refutation of its contents, by the pastor Montmollin. M. du Perroux is heavy and dull, but the good pastor is amusing from his perfect folly and absurdity; he writes, besides, such charming French, that he may with great truth and justice be called the Trublet of Neufchâtel. If I were to draw a comparison between the two writers, I should say that the one is the more solemn, the other the more sprightly fool. The pastor allows that he was sincerely delighted to admit M. Rousseau, a man who had made so much talk in the world, to the holy communion, although many of his brethren considered this as shewing him too much complaisance. "I must "confess," adds he, in an ebullition of self-satisfaction, "that independently of the pleasure and "interest I felt in promoting the eternal salvation "of such a man, my self-love was flattered by "this event; I considered it as one of the most "glorious occurrences of my life." To his credit it must be observed, that his offences against Rousseau do not prevent his doing justice to his good qualities. He says that he made himself beloved by his affability, and that though he was not rich, nay very far from rich, he contrived to be bountiful, without ostentation, on the day that he communicated. Latterly a negociation had been commenced between M. de Montmollin and his penitent, to turn aside the storm with which the latter was menaced. The pastor proposed several

expedients to M. Rousseau, (I use his own expressions) among others, that he would promise not to communicate at Easter, as well for the edification of others, as for his own benefit. On this M. Rousseau hesitated, but at length said he would consent to this stipulation, provided the pastor would engage, that he should be permitted to communicate at the other festivals. This engagement was more than the prudent Montmollin chose to take upon himself, and thus the negociation was broken off.

The conclusion of the matter is not so entertaining as the details. Rousseau, wearied out with the follies and absurdities of his pastor, took the opportunity of the drunken fray before his house, at which he was really much alarmed, to quit Moëtier Travers, and retire into a little island in the Canton of Berne. Their excellencies of Berne, notwithstanding the assertions to the contrary, made by one of their members, would not permit the unfortunate fugitive to remain on their territory, and desired him to quit it. It is said that he requested them to put him in prison till the spring, engaging to provide for his own subsistence, and not to be a charge upon any body, not to receive or write any letters but with the consent of his gaoler, and promising to quit the country at the return of spring. The answer to this humble and melancholy request was a renewed order to withdraw immediately, and it is said that in conse-

quence he has taken the route of Berlin, whence, in the spring, he proposes going to England. I am not of the opinion of those who think that Rousseau finds himself amply compensated for his misfortunes by the celebrity attached to them; I am inclined to think on the contrary, that since he quitted his asylum at Montmorency, he has been one of the most miserable of men. He is said to be, at this moment, ill at a village in Alsace.

A large volume in octavo, has just appeared, entitled *The Plagiarisms of Jean Jacques Rousseau, of Geneva, upon Education.* The conformity of many passages in Rousseau, with passages in Montaigne, Locke, and other writers, cannot be denied; but this work shews besides where he has stolen his manner, his style, his eloquence, his colouring. Every thing on the subject of morals has been said before, thus the manner of saying what is now said, is the grand point. The author of these *Plagiarisms* promises a sequel to them; but even if his laborious researches had been the means of bringing forward any thing that was not before evident and incontestable, and there is not a single instance adduced which has this recommendation, he may be assured, that he will not deprive Jean Jacques of a single reader. Equally well may he be assured, that he will himself, with great difficulty, find any one who

will deign to cast an eye over his miserable compilation, in spite of the industry with which he has endeavoured to give it the air of Rousseau's productions.

Rousseau has at length determined on going directly to England, without first visiting Berlin. So, at least, Mr. Hume tells us, and other persons who have seen him at Strasbourg confirm it. In consequence of the decree of arrest of body which is still in force against him, the government could not permit him to pass the winter at Strasbourg, and I believe he has actually quitted that town. A journal of his stay in the town is in circulation, which is so much the more amusing, as it has the air of being perfectly serious.

JOURNAL.

November 9th, 1765.—Jean Jacques Rousseau went this day, at two o'clock in the afternoon, to the theatre to see a general rehearsal of his opera, and to give his opinion upon it. I saw him very near, and at leisure, during more than two hours and a half, that the rehearsal lasted. He talks much, and appears quite at his ease upon the stage, where he arranged the actors himself, and made them rehearse his opera entire, often desiring them to go over parts again. He did not pass over the slightest fault, either in the action or the music;—the latter was executed very slowly and simply, as were also the songs. I heard him say,

that as villagers talk with great simplicity, they must be presumed to sing in the same manner. His costume is very simple; he wears the dress of an Armenian, excepting a cap of light drab cloth, about four or five fingers high, with a border of fur. I know not whether the cap be lined with fur, since he never takes it off to any body.

November 10th.—The opera of the *Devin du Village* has been performed to-day with all possible applause, except the Colin, which was very bad; the female singer did wonders. This piece was preceded by the *Young Indian Woman*, and followed by *The Tyrolese Feast*, a grand ballet pantomime. The music could not have been better performed. The theatre was completely full by half-past four, and the money was returned to many persons who could not get places. Jean Jacques sent early in the morning to the managers to have a latticed box upon the stage for four persons. For these places, as well as his own, he insisted on paying, nor would permit the managers by any means to refuse his money.

November 12th.—M. Angar went to pay his respects to M. Rousseau, when he said to him, "You see, Sir, a man who has educated his son "according to the principles which he had the "happiness to imbibe from your Emilius."—"So "much the worse, Sir, both for you and your "son, so much the worse," replied Jean Jacques.

November 13th.—Jean Jacques was presented

to M. de Blair de Boisemont, by M. de Saint Victor, king's lieutenant in the place. He was presented some days before to the Marshal de Contades, by whom, as we are assured, he was most politely received.

November 14th.—Ever since the eleventh he had desired to be presented to M. Le Preteur, who appointed him to come at eleven o'clock this morning. He has just left him after making a quarter of an hour's visit.

November 15th.—This evening he was at the play.

November 16th.—He was at the concert which is given every Saturday, by M. Chastel, treasurer of the province. On the eleventh he was at the city concert, where there was excellent music. He seems to enter much into the amusements of the place, and to be extremely pleased with his stay here.

November 17th.—He has been somewhat indisposed, and has not been out to-day.

November 18th.—To-day he goes to the city concert, where he is to hear the daughter of Barbesan, second surgeon major to the Military Hospital, who is to sing *I have lost my Servant*, a song in his opera. He has several letters of credit upon different bankers, of which he does not make any great use, among others upon M. Sollikoff, who has opened his chest to him. He took only three louis-d'ors, saying, that he had no occasion

for more. It is generally rumoured, that some persons in place have written to the minister to enquire whether he might be kept here with safety; this application has arisen from the great desire they have to retain him. He is extremely well received, but he would be much more so if permission were given for his stay. He appears himself much disposed to remain with us till March or April for the re-establishment of his health.

January, 1766.

What a strange animal is that biped without wings, to which we give the name of man. Piron, in his early youth, composed an ode, unfortunately too much celebrated, and certainly very much to be condemned, since it offended against good morals. In the decline of life he has been seized with fears of the devil; and to guard against his influence, he has printed in the *Mercury of France*, as an expiation of the fault of his youth, a *De profundis* in French verse. Thus he hopes that the supreme God, in favour of the versification of a Hebrew psalm, will shut his eyes upon the famous ode addressed in former days to the God of Gardens, and will place to his creditor account the intrepidity with which he has rendered himself ridiculous in the eyes of the public, by making, with great compunction, the *amende honorable*. Poor Piron! peace be with thy soul!

I have heard M. de Voltaire say, that La Fontaine, feeling his end approach, insisted that his friends should put him into a cart in his shirt, with his feet naked, a cord round his neck, and a lighted torch by him, and have him drawn in this way about the streets of Paris, as an expiation for having written his tales. This is not, however, very extraordinary; poets ought not to have strong minds. The same oscillation, which is necessary to enable them to seize, create, and produce, must naturally render them timid and pusillanimous; and when the soul is not fortified by wholesome and vigorous reasoning, the prejudices of infancy will, sooner or later, resume their influence.

M. Piron, since his conversion, has very much affected the company of devout people and prelates, but it seems as if the latter were not particularly happy in the honour done them.

A passport having been granted Jean Jacques to cross the kingdom to Calais, staying some days at Paris, in order to join Mr. Hume, and accompany him to England, he arrived here in consequence on the seventeenth of December last. The next day he went to the Luxembourg, in his Armenian dress, bnt as nobody was aware of his intention, nobody's curiosity was benefited by the exhibition. The Prince de Conti has lodged him within the precincts of the Temple, at the hotel of

Saint Simon, where the Armenian has had numerous levees daily both of men and women. He has also walked every day, at a fixed hour, upon the boulevards, in the part nearest to his lodging. This affectation of shewing himself unnecessarily in public, in spite of the decree of arrest still in force against him, has offended the ministry, who had yielded to the intercessions of his protectors in granting him permission to cross the kingdom in order to go to England. It has therefore been signified to him by the police, that he must pursue his journey without delay if he does not wish to be arrested. He is consequently to quit Paris on Saturday the fourth, accompanying Mr. David Hume, who is on his return to England.

It is said that Mr. Hume proposes returning soon to spend some time at Paris; he has been received with so much distinction, and in a manner so flattering, that I should think he must love France. Paris and the court have seemed emulous which should do him the most honour; and yet he is as bold in his philosophical writings as any of our French philosophers. A circumstance yet more extraordinary is, that all the pretty women have laid siege to him; and that this huge Scotch philosopher has seemed very much delighted with their society. This David Hume is an excellent man; he is naturally of a serene and tranquil temper; he understands acutely, but talks little, though what he does say is often with true

attic sal ; but he has neither warmth, grace, or that lightness and airiness of mind,—nothing, in short, that seems to assimilate itself with the warbling of those charming little machines, which we distinguish by the name of pretty women. O! we are indeed a curious people!

To return to Jean Jacques. The following letter has been handed about at Paris since his stay there, and has been very much admired.

Letter from the King of Prussia to M. Rousseau.

" You have abandoned Geneva, your country ; you have so ordered matters that you have been driven from Switzerland, a country which you have extolled so much in your writings ; France has denounced you ;—come then to me. I admire your talents, I am amused with your reveries, which, be it observed by the way, have occupied you too much and for too long a time. You must at last be wise, and be happy. You have made yourself talked of enough, for singularities little suited to a truly great man ; shew your enemies that you can at times act with common sense ; this will mortify them more than any thing you can do, without injuring yourself. My States offer you a peaceable retreat ; I would gladly promote your happiness, and will promote it if you are so disposed ; but if you persist in rejecting my offers, do not suppose that I shall mention the thing to any body. If you must torture your

mind to involve yourself in new misfortunes, choose what you please. I am a King, and can procure you any gratifications you wish for; nay, farther, and this is a thing which you cannot expect among your enemies, I will cease to persecute you, when you cease to find your pride and glory in being persecuted.

"FREDERIC."

This letter is the production of Mr. Walpole, son of the celebrated Walpole, minister to King George the second. Mr. Walpole has been at Paris ever since October last, and proposes passing the winter here. He is a man who is held in high estimation in his own country, and is the author of several works that enjoy a distinguished reputation; among other things, he has written a romance in the old gothic taste, which is much admired. In the preface to this romance, he attacks the last strictures made by M. de Voltaire upon Shakespeare, which are so much the more attackable as they are not written with perfect sincerity. Mr. Walpole is in a very indifferent state of health, and much troubled with the gout.

A-propos of M. de Voltaire and Jean Jacques Rousseau, I must here preserve an anecdote which was related to me by the person with whom the conversation took place. He was at Ferney when the *Letters from the Mountains* arrived there. When M. de Voltaire read the apostrophe to him-

self, his countenance reddened with anger, his eyes flashed fire, his whole body was in a tremble, and he exclaimed, "The rascal! the monster! "I must have him well thrashed!—Yes, I will send "to the mountains and have him belaboured even "in the arms of his governess."—"Calm your- "self," replied my informer, "I know that Rous- "seau purposes making you a visit, and that he "will be in a short time at Ferney."—"Well, "let him come."—"But how will you receive "him?"—"How will I receive him? I will give "him a good supper, I will put him in my own "bed, and will say to him, 'here is a good supper, "'this bed is the best I have, do me the "'pleasure of accepting them, and of making "'yourself comfortable and happy at my house.'" This stroke has given me the greatest pleasure. It places M. de Voltaire in a more amiable point of view than almost any thing I have yet heard of him; it gives, in two lines, the best commentary possible upon his mind and heart.

M. Noël, musician at the Court of Brunswick, is come to Paris with an instrument which he calls the *Pantaléon*, after the name of the inventor, Pantaléon Hebenstreit, a Saxon. This instrument is a sort of *tympanum* which has two hundred and seventy-six chords, and is played with two sticks. It is said, that hitherto only two men have been found in Europe able to play it, and I am not

surprised, since it is undoubtedly the most difficult instrument existing. M. Noël executes his performances in a very superior manner; with two sticks he does things that would reflect honour upon a very skilful player on the harpsichord using his ten fingers. The great difficulty is to draw melody from an instrument played with sticks, the touch of which is naturally dry and harsh; and this secret M. Noël seems to possess in an eminent degree. Nothing can be finer than his voluntaries, when he gives himself up wholly to his genius and imagination.

The *Pantaléon* was brought into France at its first invention, as we learn from the *Dialogue upon the Music of the Ancients*, to which this instrument gave occasion. The inventor exhibited his performance first in 1705, at the house of the celebrated Ninon de L'Enclos, before a numerous company. His auditors were the more astonished since he came from a country which was considered as little accustomed to producing men of talents and genius. The French nation were, at that time, in the delightful habit of thinking that every thing who was not a Frenchman, eat hay and ran upon all-fours. This opinion was maintained for a long time, as well as the vanity and ignorance upon which it was founded. Even since I have known the country, I have been witness to expressions of the greatest astonishment if ever a German was mentioned as having shewn any

symptoms of genius; he was considered as an absolute prodigy. Within the last fifteen years, the nation has begun to have somewhat more liberal and more correct notions, and to believe that talents and genius are of all countries; the German poets are read in bad translations, and with regard to music, it is even allowed that France might go to school to Germany. The *Dialogue upon the Music of the Ancients*, printed at Paris in 1725, is curious and instructive. It is by the Abbé de Chateauneuf, who was distractedly in love with Ninon, when she was fourscore. He it was who carried M. de Voltaire, then a child, to see this celebrated woman;—this Ninon, who played so extraordinary a part on the great theatre of the world during her life, and whose reputation has sustained itself in so distinguished a manner since her death.

We live, thanks to Heaven, in an age when all the arts yoked with philosophy, march with a hunter's pace towards perfection; while we make use of them like people accustomed to luxury and the abundance that wealth brings with it. A poor devil of a hackney coachman, whips on a couple of wretched nags, that can hardly keep on their legs, at the same time that a dapper young lord will break the wind of a pair of the most superb animals in a morning's drive. We see this moral picture appear, and disappear, every day in the

streets of Paris, and never think of turning it to our own profit. But a few years have passed since a would-be wit published a *Hair-dresser's Encyclopædia*, in which were engravings of more than a hundred different sorts of head-dresses. This fine work was forgotten in less than a week. When I think how precious it may one day be to posterity, supposing it to escape the injuries of time, and our indifference, I weep over the blindness and ingratitude of the age. I dread lest the same hardness of heart may be shewn towards another great man, who is lately become a candidate for immortality, by taking upon himself the modest and humble title of the *Sieur Le Gros, hair-dresser to the ladies.* All great minds in all ages and stations have always been emulous to serve the ladies; and if there be any one thing in which I am entitled to value myself highly, it is that, imitating, at an awful distance, the great Le-Gros, I burn with an ardent desire to devote myself wholly to their service. This is not the same Le-Gros who screams at the opera three times in the week, with a horrible shrill voice, as if it were one of the flock of St. Anthony, in the act of being flayed alive, and then fancies he has been singing. Our Le Gros, without any crying out, has spread the fame of his art from one end of Europe to the other; for he assures us, that he has found the means to have his work recommended to the Empress of Russia, the Queen of

Sweden, and all the Princesses of Europe, who pique themselves in any sort upon their taste, and who have deeply investigated the great art of the toilette. The work is a volume in quarto, entitled, *Engravings of artificial Head-dresses for Ladies, after original designs, with a short Treatise upon the Art of preserving and keeping in good order the Natural Hair.* This precious book contains only fifty-four pages; but how many important secrets are disclosed in so short a space. There are no less than twenty-eight different head-dresses, or, if you please wigs, given, represented on so many ladies' heads. The fair sex have risen against M. Le Gros' work; and instead of creator, would reduce him to the humble rank of an imitator, asserting that he only represents, with a cold exactness, the manner in which the ladies of the court and city constantly dress themselves; and that it is horrible to attempt imposing upon posterity in such a manner. But it is the fate of a hero to be persecuted, and this the great Le Gross experienced before he entered upon the profession of hair-dressing, an art which he has acquired of himself alone without any instruction. He was originally cook to the Marquis de Bellemare, "where," says he, "I "wrote a book upon cooking, which is not yet "printed, as I have never had time to finish it, "though it would have been very useful both to "the town and the army." Thus, whether with

the saucepan or the comb in his hand, M. Le Gros has always been great and brilliant; but he has also been constantly a mark for the arrows of envy. Happily a display of thirty dolls, all dressed, during the fair of St. Ovid in 1763, has put his enemies to silence. There is not a word to be spared in his preliminary discourse, whence I have extracted these choice details. He informs us, that he has established an academy, divided into the same number of classes as the Academy of Sciences. His modesty obliges him to make an apology for using the terms academy and classes in his establishment; but he proves to us irrefutably, that they are the only proper terms for the thing, and concludes, that in certain cases modesty is constrained to yield to the force of truth.

March, 1766.

Stanislaus, King of Poland, Duke of Lorraine and Bar, is just dead at Luneville, to the great regret of the whole province. He has written many things, and may be reckoned among the most celebrated authors of the present day. His works have been collected in four volumes, under the title of *Works of the benevolent Philosopher*; they are considered as shewing more goodness of heart than talent: his *Essay upon the Government of Poland* is his best production. The fate of this prince is still more singular than his character and his personal qualities, and this pecu-

liarity of fate has followed him to the last; for it is no common destiny to be burnt to death at the age of fourscore. It is grievous to those who experience a great loss in his death, to think that but for this accident he might have lived yet some years. This prince had never worn a morning wrapping gown; instead of it he used to wear a sort of great-coat of woollen stuff. The Queen, his daughter, who had always been a little ashamed of this costume, while she was at Luneville last year, on a visit to him, made him a present of a morning-gown engaging him to wear it. To this circumstance he owed his death. It was said, first of all, that the gown had caught fire from some ashes out of his pipe that fell upon it; and it was observed, that if they had fallen upon the stuff great-coat they would have been extinguished without doing any mischief, instead of which, they caught the wad of the gown, and the fire spread immediately with a rapidity which almost precluded the possibility of stopping it. This has made the good gossips animadvert with much wisdom upon the fatality of the present. It now, however, appears more probable that, as the King would always be left alone in his study, he had called for a light for his pipe, and not being heard immediately, his natural impatience would not suffer him to wait, and endeavouring to light it at the fire he fell; and in falling the fire caught the gown. He had assistance almost immediately;

and his old valet-de-chambre, Sister, burnt his hand very much in endeavouring to extinguish the fire. This Sister was servant to the king while he was only starost. Stanislaus does seem not to have been emulous of preserving the character of *benevolent* beyond his life: he has not left a pension to any one; his benefactions to his servants are confined to a year's wages to each. This is not rewarding like a king one who had served him from his starosty. All the people belonging to the deceased, will owe to the munificence of our sovereign whatever is done in the way of providing for them; many who have grown old in his service would be in very pitiable situations if his Majesty should adhere strictly to the terms of his father-in-law's will: but his liberality will never permit this to be the case. Thus is the last companion of the toils and the glory of Charles XII departed from the world. His death is an irreparable loss to Lorraine: nothing can be more affecting than the grief in which all the inhabitants of Nancy and Luneville seem plunged.* The last day during the exposition of the holy sacrament, and the prayers of forty hours, the streets and churches resounded with cries and groans; and when it was known that the king was dead, such crowds thronged to the chateau that the persons belonging to it were obliged to open the gates which had been shut. Every one, when admitted, threw himself upon the body, using the most bitter expressions of

grief and lamentation. I doubt whether a finer funeral oration than this can be pronounced for Stanislaus.

The Royal Academy of Painting has experienced a great loss in the death of the Chevalier Servandoni; he was at a very advanced age. This artist enjoyed a high reputation in France; he was indeed celebrated throughout all Europe. He was considered as having a great genius in architecture and theatrical decorations. He built the church of St. Sulpicius, the outside of which is not yet finished, and which is placed in so bad a situation, that the effect is almost entirely lost. His genius for theatrical decorations has always been highly extolled; but his career in this line was concluded before I came into France, so that I cannot speak of it from my own knowledge. I am not disposed to disparage merit in any way, especially when it is generally acknowledged; on the contrary, no one is more ready to do homage to it than myself: but one circumstance has always made me doubt Servandoni's claims to the eulogiums bestowed upon h. ., and that is, that no traces of his genius are remaining at any of the theatres. I know that a man of superior talents cannot transmit his genius to posterity, but some vestiges of it, if it really were of a very superior cast, will commonly be traced in the essays of his successors. Since, therefore, I see, at present, in our scenic

decorations, nothing but a shocking symmetry, presenting a strait canvas at the back, and lineal wings at the sides, nothing like an attempt at diagonal scenery, which may break the dull uniformity;—as I see our theatres lighted every where alike, and our scenists do not seem to have any idea that, in order to produce great and striking effects, the light should sometimes be thrown entirely on one side, and extinguished on the other;—this being the case, the very elements of the art of decoration seeming so little understood, I am tempted to believe that no man of true genius ever can have turned his attention to the subject. I allow that we do not find in the *Mercury of France* any eulogium of a Bibiena or a Quaglio, and that Servandoni, with Boucher and Company, are often extolled to the skies: but the first may, notwithstanding, have more merit than the latter; for I cannot forget the superb decorations which I have seen from their hands. A certain Nicolini, at present attached to the court of Brunswick, also understands the art of scenic decorations perfectly.

Servandoni has died very poor. He was, according to the saying, a bucket full of holes, whom it was impossible to enrich. In his projects he considered money as nothing; so far he certainly displayed strong symptoms of the man of genius.

The English have a very pretty comedy, entitled *The King and the Miller*, which has been translated into French many years. The subject is interesting and dramatic. A king loses himself in hunting, and esteems himself fortunate in finding a lodging at night in the house of a miller, who does not know him, but who receives him with rustic hospitality. By this accident he becomes acquainted with a line of life, and with manners, of which before he had no idea; and it also furnishes him with an opportunity of repairing an injury done to this honest family by one of his courtiers, who had seduced and carried away one of the daughters. I wish every sovereign in the world to lose himself once in his life, if he could find an asylum with such a family as that of the Miller in the English comedy.

M. Sedaine, three or four years ago, made this piece into a comic opera, calling it *The King and the Farmer*; it was performed more than a hundred times at the Italian theatre. M. Collé, reader to the Duke of Orleans, wished to bring the same subject forwards upon the French theatre, and to give his piece additional interest he has made Henry the Fourth the king who loses himself.—This idea is happy, and the author may flatter himself that it will make even his enemies interest themselves in his success, for what Frenchman could ever wish to see a piece condemned in which Henry the Fourth is the principal character. Not-

withstanding this, great talents were requisite to make a good regular comedy on such a subject; and M. Collé's execution has answered the public expectation but very moderately. This writer has little of the genuine *vis comica* in himself, the best strokes in his piece are not original, but borrowed from the English play. The character of the king, excepting in the reconciliation scene with Sully, is quite unfinished; he appears a poor creature, and even a bad character while he is with the miller, and Henry the Fourth would have been sublime. Instead of giving his peasants a tone of rustic simplicity, he gives them a sottish tone and manner, which is a very different thing. Nor is he happier in the manner which he makes the courtier and the statesman speak; whatever is tolerably well done in this way is taken word for word from Sully's Memoirs. A very interesting parallel might be drawn between the pieces of M. Sedaine and M. Collé, but it would be entirely to the advantage of the former; the latter has decidedly no talents for dramatic writing. It would be impossible not to observe, in making this comparison, that M. Sedaine supposes his audience persons of taste and discernment, M. Collé presumes them all fools. When he has some miserable *finesse* to play off he seems so terribly apprehensive that it should escape the audience, that he takes great care to put a word of remark upon it into the mouth of one of the performers. Ah! M. Collé,

this is not the way of a good dramatic writer, it is not the way of your master M. Sedaine. You must work for persons of taste and judgment, else they will turn you into ridicule; and the fools to whom your pen is devoted will not feel any gratitude for it; they will play you false in repeating mechanically what they hear from the good judges.

M. Collé calls his piece, *The Hunting Party of Henry the Fourth, a Comedy in three Acts, and in Prose.* The first act passes in the palace at Fontainbleau; it is the quarrel between the King and Sully, and their reconciliation. The second act is in the forest, and the third in the miller's house, at the village of Lieursain. The piece has never been played; one objection was made to it, that Henry the Fourth was too near our own days to be brought upon the stage. The author has printed it, embellished with four engravings from designs by Gravelot, that he might put a better price upon his publication; its success was not brilliant, and it is already nearly forgotten. It would have succeeded better in representation, since the audience would have done that for Henry the Fourth which they would not do for the poet Collé. It was twice played at Bagnolet, a country seat of the Duke of Orléans; at the first representation I was present. You will easily suppose that it was received with the utmost applause, particularly as the grandson of Henry the Fourth performed in it,

and performed in a very superior manner. The Duke of Orleans is an excellent actor, and among the company at Bagnolet are many others who might vie with even professional performers; the Count de Bonnac-Donnézan in particular. The audience was composed of about two hundred persons of the first distinction. The Duke of Orleans has accepted, as was very reasonable, the dedication of the piece, but nothing can be more flat than this same dedication. You will also find great incorrectness in M. Collé's style. This is very singular in a man who has written several songs and parodies, which are models for the choice of words, and for the admirable turns given them. But take a man out of his proper sphere and he is no longer the same; M. Collé who shews vast powers when he dances on the rope, can scarcely walk when his feet are on the ground.

On Preaching:—Such is the title of a pamphlet containing a hundred and seventy-six pages, which has occasioned a great sensation at Paris. It is by the Abbé Coyer, who is already known in the literary world as the author of several trifles on the subject of morals. The plan of his new work, *On Preaching*, is excellent; it is to prove that all those who have occupied themselves in preaching to others, ever since the world has existed, whether as poets, orators, priests, or philosophers,

have been but a parcel of mere prattlers. Prattlers, who, if they have some talent, are listened to awhile for the sake of amusement, but who are only ridiculed if they are devoid of talent, and in any case, eloquent or dull, who never corrected any body. The true preacher, the only one who preaches with any effect, according to the Abbé Coyer, is the government, because it joins to the moral maxims which it preaches, the force of example, and the power of execution.—Thus, when the government knows how to preach well, all goes well, and when it preaches ill, all the sermons of other preachers is but merchandize thrown away. You see that the text of M. Coyer is excellent, that it is susceptible of a turn equally pleasant and philosophic, that this little work was capable of having been made a chef-d'œuvre of morals and satire. But the execution does not answer to the idea, and the preacher Coyer does not preach better than his predecessors and colleagues whom he ridicules. The warmth that reigns in his pamphlet is a mere warmth of declamation which evaporates in a moment and never penetrates to the heart; his little sermon leaves no impression on the mind, we hear it, and then think no more about it. The first part is the best, where the author makes a rapid enumeration of all those who from the very beginning of the world have preached to no purpose; it is that, after all, nothing is so easy as satire, and that in attack-

ing abuses we may be almost certain of some success; we may also assure ourselves of having an inexhaustible subject, because wherever there are men there will always be a superabundance of abuses. But when, in the second part of his sermon, the Abbé would shew governments how they must preach, in order to edify the people, he becomes common-place, poor, and flat. He would establish censors, and give to the heads of families an unlimited authority over their wives, their children, and their servants; he would regulate the morals of a whole nation like the police of a convent of monks. M. Coyer is a man of a very limited capacity, with good intentions, but he is nothing more. Read in the work of M. Beccaria, the chapter on the *Essentials of a Family*, and compare it with the babble of our preacher; you will see that it is the glance of a philosopher, whose eye at once encompasses the object in all its bearings, compared with a detailer of mere every-day maxims. What are the primary objects in the government of a great nation?—To enlighten the minds of the people and inspire them with elevation of soul. In proportion as men are enlightened, their manners are softened, and when once they are rendered sensible to glory, they conceive an idea of their own dignity which restrains them from numberless crimes. The greater part of the evils that afflict human nature have their origin in the groveling state in which the minds of

so large a portion of mankind are held, and in the false direction given to their energies.

M. de Saint Foix has just published a fifth and last volume of his *Historical Essays on Paris*. The principal intention of this work is to collect curious anecdotes relative to the streets, to the different quarters, and to certain edifices in Paris. His first essay having been very successful, M. de Saint Foix then took upon himself to become an historian, and he has introduced into his account of the streets of the capital various topics relating to the history of the monarchy; from a pleasant relater of anecdotes he has become a tedious and prosing historian. The object of this last volume is to shew the conformity, or the difference between our manners, our ideas, our habits, and customs, with the manners, ideas, habits, and customs, of other nations. Ancient and modern nations,—nations that are our near neighbours, and those far removed from us,—barbarous and polished nations,—all are made to contribute their quota towards furnishing out his book; the whole is well seasoned with anecdotes, with strokes of humour and wit, and with sayings of celebrated persons. We run over this volume with pleasure; but should search in vain for any thing like philosophy in its contents.

April, 1766.

The melancholy event which has deprived

France of the presumptive heir to the crown, has drawn upon us a multitude of sad and mournful productions, from those pens which cannot pass over any opportunity of presenting themselves before the public. Paris has, for three months, been occupied with nothing but funeral orations, not one of which will occupy posterity. It would be no less impossible than superfluous to take a review of every thing that has been published on this subject, suffice it to advert to a few of those which have principally excited the public attention.

The first is a *Portrait of the late Dauphin*, dedicated to the present Dauphin his son, and embellished with portraits of both these princes. It is generally ascribed to the Marquis de Saint Mégrin, son to the Duke de Vauguyon, governor to the children of France; but some assert it to be the production of a Jesuit, by name Cerutti, who only permits M. de Saint Megrin to have the credit of it. If this eulogium be really the work of a man of letters, there is not much to be said about it; but if it be written by a young man of the court, only twenty years of age, it is well deserving of notice. The sentiments are just and noble; the style is elegant and graceful; and there reigns throughout a certain tone which is rather that of a man of the world than of a mere author. Take it all together, it is the best thing which has appeared upon the occasion.

A funeral oration pronounced at Paris, on the first of March, by Monseigneur Charles de Loménie de Brienne, Archbishop of Toulouse, and since printed, has not acquired any reputation. It is the work of a man of some taste, but is feebly written, and does not indicate much talent.

Who should have expected to laugh upon so melancholy an occasion? The reverend Father Fidèle de Pau, a capuchin of the province of Aquitaine, has, however, found the means of diverting Paris very much with his *Funeral oration on the Death of Monseigneur the Dauphin*, pronounced in the church of the capuchin nuns at Paris, and published at the same time with the oration of the Archbishop of Toulouse. This capuchin has some talents, perhaps as much as any of those who have taken the subject in hand; but as the taste of a capuchin appears every where, the production is every where ridiculous. I have no doubt that the harangue made a very strong impression upon all who heard it pronounced; and that the good nuns, even now, talk of it among themselves with the warmest admiration. The capuchin presents his hero to the contemplation of his auditors, under every possible point of view, as a son, a husband, a brother, a warrior, a man of humanity, a man of letters and science, a religious man, &c. &c.—As a son, he says, that the king, his father, was no sooner troubled with want of rest, than his compassionate heart was a

stranger to repose. With regard to the queen, he asserts, that the last five centuries have not seen such a mother; and he asks triumphantly, whether the next ten will see such a son. This question, to make an observation by the way, savours somewhat of heresy, particularly in the mouth of a capuchin, who ought to believe the end of the world at hand, and not think, after so perverse an age as ours, of ten more ages to come. In quality of brother, he assures the capuchin nuns, that the dauphin considered them, as by their rank and merit, much above Asiatic potentates, and they had a much higher place in his heart. To paint the Dauphin, as a husband, he apostrophizes the dauphiness herself; "Tell us, O princess of grief, "whether the Dauphin was not to you one of the "most loving of princes!"—As a warrior, he describes him at the battle of Fontenoy, and sketches a picture of this battle capuchinically magnificent. As a man of humanity, he says cavalierly, "Seek elsewhere, gentlemen, one who loves you, "he died the other day at Fontainebleau."—As a man of letters and science, he assures us, that he was the eye of the court of Versailles; and that if we consult the testimony of pitiful envy, it will tell us, that he had even too much knowledge for a prince. On the article of religion, he asserts, that the false reasonings of the deists were the occasion of his dying with grief; and that if his mouth be for ever closed, it is less by the silence

of death, than from regret, that he could not dictate a decree for the punishment of the philosophers. Who would believe, that so wise a defender of the good cause, a capuchin so eloquent, so ardent, so charitable, could be treated like an encyclopædist?—Yet so it is; his oration had scarcely amused Paris three days before it was suppressed by the higher powers: nor this alone, the Archbishop of Paris even prohibited the poor capuchin's preaching and confessing. He, who knew that all Paris was occupied with his oration, could not refrain from saying to the Archbishop, "Now confess, my lord, is there not here a little "jealousy and envy on the part of the Archbishop "of Toulouse?"—And, on going away, he said, "I had often been warned that superior merit "was always persecuted in France, but I would "not believe it." In fact, it does seem a strange abuse of authority, to lay such an interdict on a poor capuchin for having done his best in a funeral oration upon such an occasion. It seems the more severe upon our poor father, since he has been an ardent defender of the church against the philosophy of the present day. He published, some little time ago, a large volume, entitled *Dithyrambic Philosophy*, which nobody then thought of reading; but the author having now become celebrated, through his funeral oration, it is much sought after, and has been found to furnish matter with which the reader may amuse himself very

'much; it is absolutely comic, from its extreme abusiveness. Alas! is such an interdict as he has received the recompense so zealous a defender of the cause had reason to expect from holy mother church?—He has taken the road to Pau, his native town, where he will have leisure to meditate in his cell upon the injustice and ingratitude of the age.

M. Thomas, a profane orator, has judged proper to mingle his voice with the voices of so many sacred orators, and has compiled an eulogium upon the Dauphin which may satisfy those philosophers, citizens, and men of taste, who find great difficulty in digesting the numerous scraps of bad Latin, and passages of wretched declamation with which the orations of our prelates abound. M. Thomas has aimed at sketching, under the form of a picture of the late Dauphin, that of an accomplished Prince, well persuaded, that some truths useful to those who, like him are destined to govern, will do more honour to his memory than all the idle eulogiums that can be lavished upon him. Such was the plan of his oration; but in overcharging the picture, he has missed his aim, and has not satisfied any class of readers. M. Thomas might have been pardoned for making his hero a Trajan or a Marcus Aurelius, in order to introduce a variety of truths useful to Princes; but the Prince he paints is a chimerical being who

never did exist in any place, and never will exist in any age. The picture is cold and uninteresting; the monotony of a style always equally elevated and emphatic, renders it fatiguing. Those who do not love sermons ask by what authority M. Thomas pretends to give lessons to kings? and it must be owned, that if the author really believed the Prince he celebrates, to have a fourth part of the virtues he ascribes to him, he certainly cannot be a descendant of that apostle who could not believe until he had seen and touched. As for my part, if panegyrics are a tribute indispensably due to the glory of Princes, I would have them at least pronounced while they are alive, and in their presence, for then every one comparing himself in secret with the picture drawn by the orator, would find where the resemblance failed, and would learn what was expected of him by the nation. What I can least of all pardon to M. Thomas are some ideas little just, which I have found in his eulogium. For example, he discusses whether sensibility in a Prince is not a quality more dangerous than useful, and whether reason alone and a love of order are not sufficient to urge him to do good. He decides the question in favour of sensibility, 'pitying those cold and unfeeling bosoms who would decide differently. This is soon said; but a philosopher is not answered by a reproach, and does not run so fast.

M. Thomas certainly puts forth a number of very fine things upon sensibility, and its effects on the mind of a Prince. He says, that it is this which moistens his eyes with all the tears shed by others, which makes him shudder at every groan uttered, which makes his bosom palpitate at the sight of misery, which carries to his heart a corresponding stroke, with all the ills scattered around him over three hundred leagues of country. If this were so, how much would a Prince with a heart of sensibility, be an object of pity? he could not resist for four and twenty hours the afflicting spectacle of human misery, the piercing cries of the unfortunate. But since sensibility does not give ears that hear to the distance of three hundred leagues, nor eyes to penetrate through the pomp and splendor of the royal abode into the cottage of the poor, into the hovel of the oppressed, nor heart enough to admit of its being torn at every injustice committed under the name of the sovereign, without his knowledge;—since, on the contrary, sensibility may expose a prince to favour a courtier whom he loves, at the expense of the citizen whom he does not know;—since it may render him liable to other acts of predilection and compassion, very affecting in an individual, but very much in opposition to justice in a Prince, M. Thomas must permit cold and calculating wisdom to balance whether a just prince is not a greater present from heaven to a numerous

people, than a prince of sensibility. This wisdom so aspersed by M. Thomas, would perhaps think that sensibility would be best confined to the hearts of princes who have the happiness to govern small states, where their eyes can see every thing, their ears can hear every thing, and the powerful cannot oppress the weak without the cries of the latter being heard in the palace of their common master. The picture which M. Thomas draws of religion, is very fine for the orator, but that also would lose its value in the eyes of the philosopher.

M. Rousseau has taken very much in dudgeon the letter from the King of Prussia fabricated by Mr. Walpole. He is naturally disposed to believe in plots, in black and dark intrigues, and according to him this letter involves some deep mystery of iniquity. The whole mystery, however, rests in an endeavour to enliven the public at the expense of an author who is himself very far from lively. If the crowned head was disposed to take things up in as great a huff as the author, if Frederic were as much addicted to ill-humours as Jean Jacques, this letter might become the occasion of a bloody war. It is printed in French and English in the public papers in London, and M. Rousseau has just addressed the following letter upon the subject to the editor of the *London Chronicle*.

"Wootton, 3d of March, 1766.

"You have failed, Sir, in the respect which "every private person owes to a crowned head, "in attributing publicly to the King of Prussia "a letter full of extravagance and malignity, of "which, for these very reasons, you ought to "have known that he could not be the author. "You have even dared to transcribe his signature, "as if you had seen it written with his own hand. "I inform you, Sir, that this letter was fabricated "at Paris, and what rends my heart is, that the "impostor has accomplices in England. You "owe to the King of Prussia, to truth, and to "me, to print the letter which I write to you, "and which I sign, as an atonement for a fault "with which you would doubtless reproach your-"self severely, if you knew to what a dark tran-"saction you have rendered yourself accessary. "I salute you, Sir, very sincerely,

"ROUSSEAU."

Mr. Walpole is just returned to England, and the House of Commons, of which he is a member, may, if they are disposed, commence a prosecution against him for forging this letter. Providence, which is so called because it foresees things at a great distance, has punished him beforehand, by afflicting him with the gout in the severest manner. It yields to none in England except to

that which is pleased to fasten itself upon William Pitt.

To complete the history of Jean Jacques upon the Continent, we must not omit to notice, that the venerable class of pastors at Neufchâtel, exceedingly dissatisfied with the sovereign council of this principality, for not having evinced a proper readiness to support their projects of lapidation against the unfortunate author of *Emilius*, presented a statement of grievances to the King of Prussia, against the infractions of the said sovereign council, upon the well-known rights of the said venerable class. To this his Majesty was pleased to answer as follows:

"The King, upon the humble memorial of the "company of pastors in the sovereignty of Neuf-"châtel and Valengin, concerning the pretended "infractions of the council for some time past "upon their just rights, wills and orders, that "the following answer be given, viz. That his "Majesty, far from acquiescing in the humble "demand made by this body, cannot refrain from "being exceedingly dissatisfied with the restless, "turbulent, and almost seditious proceedings of "the said body of pastors with regard to a man "whom his Majesty condescends to honour "with his protection. Given at Potsdam, this "twenty-sixth day of February, 1766."

His said Majesty farther condescended to add with his own hand: "You do not merit to be pro-
"tected by us, unless your conduct shall be regu-
"lated hereafter with as much evangelical mild-
"ness as it displays at present a spirit of vertigo,
"of restlessness, and sedition.

"Signed, FREDERIC."

The laudable press of Ferney has thought it a solemn duty to make this double answer as public as possible, and has put it into circulation with the following advertisement annexed. "These
"two pieces having fallen into our hands, we make
"them public, to the end that they may serve for
"ever as an example to all princes, as an instruc-
"tion to all the magistrates of Europe, and a
"safeguard to all citizens. From our residence
"at Ferney, this twentieth day of March, 1766."

We have just received from Germany a copy of a work in one vol. 12mo. entitled, *An Abridgment of the Abbé de Fleury's Ecclesiastical History.* The portrait of this poor Abbé is given as a frontispiece; he is represented with his cloak devoutly thrown over his left shoulder, but they have forgotten to make him crossing himself with his right hand, and that he most certainly would have done more than once in reading this abridgment. Nay, on reading the first paragraph of the advertisement prefixed to it, he would have been tempted to believe his abridger possessed with Beelzebub and all

his coadjutors. Here then we see the late Abbé Fleury placed in a situation somewhat similar to that of the late Abbé Bazin; the latter has found a nephew editor, the former a nephew abridger. Fleury well merited this honour; he was an honest man, who loved historical truth above every thing, and who has extracted confessions from history which would not be pardoned at this time. But in his days the church did not take umbrage with so much haste as at the present moment; it understood joking better. We often solicited Mr. Hume, during his stay in France, to write an *Ecclesiastical History*; it would be one of the finest undertakings in literature, and one of the most important services that could be rendered to philosophy and humanity. The Abbé de Galiani would, perhaps, of all men existing at present in Europe, be the most capable of executing such a work. M. de Voltaire has no longer the vigour requisite to engage in a labour so arduous, and it is to be feared, besides, that he would be too much disposed to turn the subject into one of satire and ridicule. Till we have something better, the *Abridgment* in question is not without its use. It is attributed to a monarch of the north.

M. Loiseau de Mauléon, a celebrated advocate of the parliament, has just given us a memorial in behalf of three soldiers of the guards, which has made much talk, no less by the singula-

rity of the cause which it defends, than by the manner in which the author has treated it. Of the three soldiers two were drunk, the third, who had joined them, was perfectly sober. The two first quarelled, in a narrow passage, with some citizens, who were also drunk; the third, like a prudent man, seized one of his comrades, and pushed him into the street, where he held him to prevent his fighting. In the mean time the other soldier, beset by the six drunken citizens, drew his sword to keep them off, and make his way through them; when at the same time one of the citizens rushing towards him to lay hold of him, ran upon the sword, which went through his body, and killed him on the spot. The populace assembled, the guard was called, but they only arrested the soldier whom his sober comrade had taken out of the fray, while the witnesses, by their confused babble, embrangled the affair still farther, confounding the actions of the different soldiers, whose names they did not know. Marshal Biron, colonel of the French guards, obtained letters of pardon, in which the three soldiers were included; but unfortunately the man who was kept quiet by his comrade, was designated as the author of the murder instead of him by whom it really was committed. When interrogated he was advised to own himself the murderer, since otherwise he could not avail himself of the letters of pardon. This confession was made, but it only contributed to

embarrass the cause, for it was now found that he was not the man to whom the murder was ascribed by the witnesses, but that he had been detained in the street by his comrade; from this the judges inferred, that being by his own confession the perpetrator of the deed, he had done it premeditatedly, and not in his own defence, and they refused in consequence to confirm his letters of pardon. Thus was this unfortunate man on the point of being broken on the wheel for a murder which he had not committed. His comrades then came forward to attest the truth, and the real perpetrator produced witnesses who deposed, that the stroke proceeded from him. There is in this whole adventure a number of very odd circumstances, with a singular mixture of good faith and heroism. It is not yet known what the fate of the three soldiers will be. Their advocate has explained the circumstances, involved as they are, with extreme clearness and precision. The pathetic parts run a little too much into the declamation common at the bar, and this is a great pity.

Article by M. Diderot.

You ask me, my friend, what I think of the *Eulogy of the Dauphin*, by M. Thomas? I shall answer you in the very same words that I answered him himself, when he read it to me.

"Never was the gift of speech so unworthily prostituted. You have passed in review all the great

men past, present, and to come, and have humbled them before a child who never said or did any thing. Was your prince a greater man than Trajan!—Well, sir, know that Pliny disgraced himself by his *Eulogy of Trajan*. You have a character to support for truth and honesty, and you are going to destroy it; if our history should one day be written by a Tacitus, you will be marked with opprobium. You will make me throw into the fire all the *Eulogies* that have proceeded from your pen, and you will dispense with me from reading any that you may henceforward compose. I do not require of you, after the manner of the Egyptians, to take the corpse of the Dauphin and display it upon the banks of the Seine, there to examine with severity into his conduct, but I cannot permit you to be an abject, and at the same time, a clumsy courtier. If you or I had been born in the place of the Dauphin, we might not perhaps have remained unknown for thirty years; France might have learned that in the interior of the palace a child was in training, who gave every promise of being one day a great man; the Dauphin was not superior to either of us. I ask you then, whether you would ever have had the face to take to yourself the eulogium you have pronounced? No one ever made me feel so forcibly as you have done, how much truth, or at least the art of appearing true, is essential to an orator, since, notwithstanding the grand and lofty things with which

your work is filled, I could not give my attention to it. It will be known, sir, what has determined you to speak thus, and the littleness of your motive will never be pardoned. You dishonour yourself—yes, sir, you dishonour yourself without doing any honour to the memory of the Dauphin.—Far from persuading me, from touching me, from moving me, you have only excited my indignation; you have not then been eloquent. I am not come, like Cæsar, with the condemnation of Ligarius signed, but you must have taken very different ground to make it fall from my hands.—If your prince merited a hundredth part of the encomiums which you lavish upon him, who has ever resembled him? who ever will resemble him? The past has not produced his equal, the future can scarcely produce any thing that will equal him. You will oppose to me sufficient guarantees,—honest, enlightened and true guarantees of what you say. But of these guarantees I know nothing; I do not dispute their veracity, I do not dispute that they may be enlightened, but shew me one among them who dare mount the rostrum by your side, and say, "*I attest that all which this orator has said is strict truth.*" The public will exclaim against you, sir; you will hear them, and I do not give you more than a month before you will be ashamed of your work. If I had, like you, a voice that knows how to invoke manes, I would invoke those of Daguesseau, of Sully, and

of Descartes, you should hear their reproaches, and you would not be able to support them.

"Is it possible to believe that a father, who apparently knew his son, can be pleased with a parcel of hyperboles, heaped without mercy on each other, the falsehood of which he will never be able to dissemble to his own bosom?—What can he think of letters, and of those by whom they are cultivated, when one of the most honest among us unblushingly utters such a string of falsehoods in the face of a whole nation?—His sisters and his wife too, what can they think? as to his servants they will only laugh. If I were your brother I would steal from my bed at night, and quietly taking this *Eulogium* from your port-folio, would commit it to the flames, fully assured that in so doing, I was shewing how much, how truly I loved you. Had I read it alone, in my own apartment, I should have been tempted a hundred times to throw it on the ground and spurn it with my feet, nor do I think that the talent displayed in it could ever have made me gather it up again. Your exaggerations will do more injury to your hero than the most severe satire, because satire would have revolted, whereas unreasonable eulogium gives a just presumption that the orator has not found in the facts any thing which could supercede the necessity of it. 'Tis in vain that you would seek to defend yourself by the pretence of stating some grand and important truths which kings are not accustomed to

hear; these truths are blasted and rendered of no effect by the prostituted application you make of them. What will tyrants think? how will they fear the voice of posterity? what shall restrain them when they can say to themselves, "Let us "do what we please, some one will always be "found to praise and applaud us." You are a thousand times more deserving of censure than Pliny. Trajan was a great prince;—Trajan was still alive, and Pliny perhaps meant to give him a lesson. But the Dauphin is dead, he is no longer in a state to receive lessons; the moment for his being weighed in the balance of justice is arrived, and this is the way in which you hold that balance. Sir, sir, I tell you, if I were king I would forbid all rhetoricians, and you above all, to take up the pen in my favour. And if to the justice of Marcus Antoninus I joined, unhappily for you, the cruelty of Phalaris, I would have your tongue torn out and nailed to a post in the most public part of the town, as a lesson to future orators to respect truth.

"I have heard an eulogium of the Dauphin, which pleased me because it was just; and the following is a short analysis of it. The orator carefully avoided erecting himself into a panegyrist. He allowed that it might be right to panegyrise the king, but he conceived that the constrained, obscure, unknown character which a Dauphin has to play, converted the orator rather into an apo-

logist, and you shall see the use he made of this idea.

"He began by pitying the condition of princes; he shewed that all the advantages which are so much the subject of envy, are greatly overbalanced by the difficulties attending their receiving a good education. He entered into the details of these difficulties, and afterwards asked his auditor what he himself would have been, he who was listening to this detail, if he had been in the place of the Dauphin? He next gave a sketch of the manner in which the Dauphin's time was usually employed. He spoke without enthusiasm or emphasis, and then asked his auditor what he might be permitted to hope from a prince, who had been accustomed to reading good books, and had been inspired with a taste for good actions? He painted the depravity of our morals, conjugal faith spurned in all ranks of society, and asked whether some credit was not due to the wisdom and resolution of a prince, who even in a court had respected it? From thence he adverted to the Dauphin's reverence for the king, to his affection for his children and his sisters, to his attachment towards his friends, to his amiable character, to his understanding, to his actions, to his conversation, and to some other well known personal and domestic qualities; from all which he drew the happiest prognostics for the people whom he was destined to govern. But the great powers of his eloquence were

reserved for the finest moment in this prince's mortal career, the patience and resignation with which he supported his last illness, his contempt of all worldly greatness, and his firmness in meeting the approach of death. The stroke once passed, he displayed him alone, abandoned, solitary, in a vast palace, and asked what difference there was then between the son of a king and of a peasant?

"After having thus drawn from me a moderate and reasonable eulogium of the Dauphin, he then led me to ask: "But would he have been a great "king?"—to which he had the courage to answer, "I cannot say, God knows:"—adding almost immediately: "What is it to be a great king?—"this it is." He then proceeded to draw the most frightful picture of royalty;—a picture which terrified alike by the qualities which the eminence of the situation requires, and by the multiplicity of circumstances which prevent their having their full effect. Then, as if addressing a numerous audience, he said: "Sirs, far from weeping over "the ashes of the Dauphin, let us unite our voices "to his, and with him thank the Eternal, who in "placing him out of reach of the throne to "which he was destined, has removed him from "the dreadful alternative of making millions hap-"py or unhappy; an alternative from which all "the genius, all the understanding, all the resour-"ces within the power of human nature, could

" not have guaranteed him." 'Tis thus that my orator was eloquent, skilful, and true; 'tis thus that a man might fairly have opened to himself the doors of the Academy, without attempting to force them."

The tale of *The Queen of Golconda*, is the masterpiece of the Chevalier de Boufflers. He composed it five years ago, at the seminary of St. Sulpicius, during the probation he underwent with the intention of his taking upon himself ultimately the crosier and the mitre. How this ended has been already seen. It must be acknowledged that the *History of the Queen of Golconda* is somewhat too free; but setting that aside, it is one of the most charming works, in its way, that has appeared for a long time. It would not be a discredit to M. de Voltaire himself.

We must not omit here to preserve the record of a singular cure which has been performed by M. Tronchin, of Geneva. This celebrated man was appointed, in the beginning of the present year, first physician to the Duke of Orleans. A Prior of the Præmonstratensians of Blois came to consult him, having been tormented for several years with insupportable pains in the head. These pains were so excessive, that in the paroxysms, which were renewed almost every day, the sufferer was often tempted to beat his head against the

wall. His sufferings were the most acute in a stormy and intemperate state of the atmosphere. M. Tronchin, after examining well into the nature and symptoms of the disease, ordered two nerves to be cut, the one in the middle of the patient's cheek, the other farther back, near the ear. The patient declared he had much rather submit to any operation, however painful, than be exposed any longer to the sufferings he had endured for so many years; the surgeon, Louis, would not, however, perform the operation without a written order signed by M. Tronchin; but this obtained, it was performed about two months ago, under the physician's immediate direction, and in his presence. It made no little talk. The faculty, unable to support the idea of the fame which would accrue to a formidable rival from its success, did every thing they could, first to turn the thing into ridicule, and afterwards to cast an odium upon it. It was circulated all over Paris that the Prior was in the last agonies, and could not possibly recover, and the monastery of the Præmonstratensians at Paris, whither he had retired, was beset every morning with an infinite number of people, who came to inquire after him in the hope of hearing that he was dying, if not dead. The fact, however, is, that the patient never was in any danger from the operation; that he is now perfectly recovered, and that he has been entirely free from pains in the head ever since. I have

heard M. Tronchin say, that in the course of his practice he has had occasion to order this operation to four different persons. The first on whom the experiment was made was the wife of M. Rapin Thoyras, the author of the *History of England*; but this was not entirely successful, as he only ordered the nerve in the cheek to be cut, not that also near the ear; but in the other three instances, where both nerves had been cut, the cure had been complete.

Paris is much occupied at this moment with the horrible catastrophe that has happened at Abbeville, which, however, we as yet know but confusedly, and which would have filled all Europe with pity and indignation, if the inhuman hearts concerned in the tragedy had not by their menaces forced the advocates of innocence and humanity to silence. The extract of a letter from Abbeville, which I subjoin, will instruct you in the principal circumstances. It is affirmed, that what is said there of M. Belleval is not strictly true; but it is very certain that private animosities dictated the sentence at Abbeville, and, I am assured, that similar motives occasioned it to be confirmed by a decree of the parliament. It will, however, descend to posterity as the most disgraceful monument existing of horrible cruelty, and that perpetrated in the midst of an age, which boasts so much of its philosophy and illumination.

"In the night between the eighth and ninth of August, 1765, a wooden cross, which was erected upon the bridge at Abbeville, was mutilated by some strokes of a sabre or hanger. This, to a blind and superstitious people, was a subject of great scandal. The Bishop of Amiens, one of the most fanatical of all the bishops in France, immediately repaired with his clergy, in procession, to the spot, to expiate this pretended crime by a number of superstitious ceremonies. Admonitions were published to discover the author. This practice of disturbing timid consciences by admonitions, of alarming weak imaginations, by enjoining them, under pain of eternal damnation, to reveal facts in which the deponent had no personal concern,—this practice, I say, is one of the most fatal abuses in the criminal jurisprudence of France. More than a hundred fanatics came forwards with their depositions upon this occasion. Not one could point out the author of the mutilation; and it is to be presumed that, whoever he was, he had not called any witnesses to the feat he was performing. All that these witnesses could urge was, that they had heard say such and such things; vague rumours were brought forwards, charging some of the principal young men in the place, with having uttered impious propositions, with having been guilty of various profanations, with some indecorums, which, at the utmost, merited no more than paternal reproof. The courts of justice at

Abbeville instituted a suit against these young men; but the charge of the mutilated cross was wholly passed over, they were only called upon to answer the pretended crimes with which they were charged, in consequence of the admonitions. It is easy to form an idea of the consternation into which a small town was thrown, where five young men of the principal families, all minors, were at once impeached by a criminal suit. Their parents made them abscond; but the same animosity which had stirred up the affair, pursued them in their flight. Search was made for them, and two of the five were taken, the young Chevalier de La Barre, and a youth of seventeen, by name Moisnel. The sentence given at Abbeville, the twenty-eighth of February last, condemns Gaillard d'Estalonde to make the *amende honorable*, to have his tongue cut out, and his hands cut off, and to be burnt alive. This unfortunate young man, however, with two others, escaped to England. John Francis Le Fèvre Chevalier de La Barre was, by the same sentence, condemned to make the *amende honorable*, to have his tongue cut out, his head afterwards cut off, and his body reduced to ashes. Judgment was suspended upon the three others. It is necessary that criminal sentences should be confirmed by a decree of the parliament within whose jurisdiction they are given. The affair of Abbeville was carried before the Parliament of Paris. Here these unfortunate young men might,

in defending themselves by printed memorials, have hoped to excite public commiseration: but the proceedings of the court at Abbeville having been laid before M. Le Fèvre d'Ormesson, an excellent criminal lawyer, and a near relation of the Chevalier de La Barre, he was so fully impressed with the idea that the sentence could not be confirmed by the parliament, that he recommended no public defence of the accused to be made. He hoped that these young men, freed from the accusation, without its having become much known, would one day think themselves obliged to him for preventing the unnecessary publicity of so unfortunate an affair. The security of this magistrate proved the ruin of his clients. It may be assumed, as an indisputable fact, that a public statement of the case, in the way of a memorial, would have excited so general a cry in favour of the accused, that the parliament would never have dared to confirm the sentence of Abbeville. For want of this, the sentence was confirmed by a decree passed on the fourth of June; and, after many useless solicitations to obtain the king's pardon, the Chevalier de La Barre was executed on the first of July. He died with unexampled courage and tranquillity. The decree charges him with having passed close by the procession of the Holy Sacrament without taking off his hat or falling upon his knees; with having uttered blasphemies against God, the Holy Eucha-

rist, the Holy Virgin, and other Saints; with having sung two impious songs; with having testified marks of respect and veneration for impure and infamous books; with having profaned the sign of the cross, and the benedictions used in the church. These are the crimes which occasioned an imprudent and thoughtless young man to undergo the torture of a cruel death in the heart of France, and in the eighteenth century. In countries where the inquisition is established, these crimes would have been punished with a month's imprisonment and a reprimand.

"It is certain, that M. Pellot, a counsellor of the Great Chamber, reporter of the proceedings to the parliament, made an apology for the accused, and concluded, that considering their youth and other circumstances, they ought to be discharged from the accusation; but the parliament thought fit to judge otherwise. It has also been remarked that the first president of the parliament, who presided at the confirmation of this horrible sentence, had had a personal quarrel with M. Le Fèvre d'Ormesson. It makes one shudder to think that private enmities should be suffered to influence a judge in matters of life and death.

"One thing is very certain, that all hearts capable of feeling have been struck with the utmost horror at this barbarous transaction; and that humanity calls for a public avenger, for a

man eloquent, courageous, and capable of feeling deeply such an act of complicated injustice and barbarity, to transmit a faithful account of it to posterity, dressed in all its most hideous colours. This would, undoubtedly, be a task worthy of M. de Voltaire, if there were not some personal considerations, which render it necessary for him to proceed with caution in the matter. Eight advocates, among whom we find the names of Gerbier and Doutrement, have signed, too late, a consultation in favour of the young Moisnel, and the other accused, on whom judgment had been suspended. This consultation, drawn up with the utmost forbearance, and with the greatest simplicity, is enough to soften the most obdurate heart. The parliament, who are extremely offended at it, have tried to suppress it juridically; the advocates, who signed it, were summoned, and the first president of the parliament was required to reprimand them very severely. But M. Gerbier defended the conduct of himself and his associates very strenuously, and declared, in the name of all his brethren, that if the least step was taken judicially against this consultation, the entire body of advocates would quit the bar. This declaration stopped the proceedings of the parliament; but the whole edition of the consultation has been bought up, so that it is no longer possible to get a copy. By these means the talk of this horrible affair has been stifled. Paris concerned itself little in the

matter; far the greater number even of well-informed people are still ignorant of the details of it. It was talked of for two or three days, and then, as M. de Voltaire says, away they went jovially to the comic-opera; thus was this atrocity, like many others, wholly forgotten amid hilarity and dissipation. Hearts of true sensibility will, however, never forget it, and will always desire ardently that it may be transmitted to posterity as a deplorable monument of the perverseness of mankind;—they will always wish that the names of the authors of such a tragedy may be known and branded as they ought to be,—rendered more odious than they have sought to render the names of young Moisnel and his companions. These unfortunate youths have been censured and declared infamous; and blasted by such a stigma, Moisnel, the only one who was in custody, has been released.

"The historian of the county of Ponthieu relates, that, in 1706, a wealthy inhabitant of Abbeville bequeathed all his property to Louis the Fourteenth, on condition that he would employ it in a crusade. If ever he publishes a second edition of his history, it is to be hoped, that to this act of individual fanaticism, he will subjoin the act of public fanaticism, lately committed in the murder of the Chevalier de La Barre. He will then, it is further to be hoped, not omit to record, that the two songs mentioned in the act

of accusation against this unfortunate young man, one of which is only filthy, not obscene, or profane; —that these two songs, I say, have been well known for these last hundred years, and are very commonly to be heard in garrisoned towns, where the most severe discipline cannot restrain, in this respect, a soldiery always disposed to be licentious. It was a journeyman hair-dresser who, prompted by the admonitions, deposed that he had heard the Chevalier de La Barre hum these songs one morning while he was dressing his hair."

The late Count de Caylus had undertaken as well by his own researches, as by establishing prizes at the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles-Lettres, to investigate thoroughly all the historical monuments still in existence relative to Egypt. A young man of Berne, by name Schmidt, at present attached to the court of Baden-Dourlach, has obtained eight or nine of these prizes in succession, all having for their object the explanation of some Egyptian custom, ceremony, or costume. I believe the Academy had no difficulty in deciding to whom the prize should be awarded, M. Schmidt, being, for a long time, the only candidate for fame on a course so sterile. Within a short time, however, a determined rival has started; and while M. Schmidt has been crowned for explaining to us the costume of the ancient kings of Egypt, with no less minuteness than the first

taylor of the court of Memphis could have done, M. Ameilhon has obtained another prize for giving us an exact and faithful history of the commerce and navigation of the Egyptians, under the reign of the Ptolemies. This work has just appeared in a volume of three hundred pages octavo,—M. Ameilhon is librarian to the city library at Paris. He will not long remain a competitor with M. Schmidt, for the Egyptian prizes, since, if I mistake not, he has just been chosen a member of the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles-Lettres, and the members cannot be candidates for the prizes.

The views of the Count de Caylus were certainly commendable; for if we could thoroughly know Egypt, we should possess the key to all the arts and sciences of Greece. But, unfortunately, monuments in every way are wanting; and those that have descended down to us are so imperfect, so full of gaps and chasms, they are so obscure and inexplicable, that we must never flatter ourselves with being able to extract from them the true history of the human species; and it is to this that a perfect knowledge of Egyptian antiquities would lead. It is true, though I was near passing them over, that we have among us two men who are never defective in the knowledge of any points relating to Egypt; who are as much at home there as I am in my own apartment; and who would esteem my doubts upon these matters personal offences to them. I ask pardon, then, of the Count

de Guignes, and the Abbé Barthelemy; but when they shall produce me their certificates, of having passed a noviciate of three or four thousand years in some seminary at Memphis, and of having been admitted to the confidence of the Egyptian priests, who probably were the most close and secret of human beings, I will listen to them with complacency, and adopt, without hesitation, all the important discoveries they will impart to me.

September, 1766.

M. Falconet, Sculptor to the King, and Professor in the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture, has just been solicited, by the Empress of Russia, to execute a statue of Peter the Great. This statue is to be in bronze, and it is to be erected at St. Petersburgh. What a monument, and what an undertaking! It is, of all those which a sovereign in this age could propose, the finest, the most grand, the most worthy of a man of talents. The wild and astonishing genius of Peter the Great, that sublime instinct which led a prince, still barbarous himself, to seek the regeneration of a vast empire, renders him a properer subject for bronze than any sovereign that ever existed. I wish that M. Thomas, who has long been employed in writing an epic poem on Peter the Great, may raise a monument to this great man as durable as the bronze of M. Falconet. The genius of Peter will thus have served to immortalize two

Frenchmen; and these latter, in transmitting to posterity the honours paid by Catherine to the founder of the Russian empire, will teach succeeding generations by what monuments it will be proper to consecrate the memory of the august princess who has laboured so successfully to bring his work to perfection.

M. Falconet carries with him a young woman of eighteen, called Mademoiselle Collot, who has been his pupil for more than three years, and who executes busts with the greatest success. This is a rare phænomenon, perhaps a single one of the kind. Several busts, both of men and women, executed by her, are striking likenesses, and are full of spirit and character. That of our celebrated actor, Preville, in the character of Sganarelle in the *Medecin malgré lui*, is an astonishing likeness. She has done one of M. Diderot for me, which I shall cherish with the utmost care and delight. One of Prince Galitzin, the Russian plenipotentiary at this court, is speaking like the rest. I have no doubt, that if some of these busts had been presented at the Academy, she would have been unanimously elected into it, and it is an honour which her master ought to have procured her before her departure for St. Petersburgh. This young person unites, with so rare a talent, a sincerity of character and a politeness of manners altogether delightful. She has a fine understanding, which is embellished by a purity and simpli-

city of heart, with a *naïveté* of sentiments that very much increases the interest they excite. This she has promised me always to preserve most religiously.

We have lately sustained a loss, which must not be passed over in silence. Mademoiselle Randon de Malboissière is just dead, in the flower of her age, not being more than eighteen or nineteen. Mr. Bulkley, an officer in one of our Irish regiments, arrived some days before her death with the intention of marrying her, but he came in fact only to pay the last honours to her remains. The day which had been destined for that of her marriage was indeed the day of her interment. This young lady was once the destined wife of the young Du Tartre, the son of a celebrated notary at Paris, a youth of the greatest hopes and talents. But, alas! he was carried off last year by a short and acute illness, assisted by the advice of Dr. Bouvard, the physician. It is said that Mademoiselle de Malboissière's attachment to this young man was so great, and her affliction for the loss of him consequently so severe, that it is thought to have shortened her days. She was already celebrated at Paris for the accomplishments of her mind, and for the knowledge she had acquired. She understood seven different languages perfectly; that is to say, the Greek, the Latin, the Italian, the Spanish, the German, the English, and

the French. The living languages she spoke perfectly well. Her parents are inconsolable for the loss of her, as may easily be imagined.

The loss above related recals to my mind another, not less to be lamented; this is Sir James Macdonald, the chief of a clan of Scotch Highlanders, who died at Frescati, in Italy, the twenty-sixth of July last, at only twenty-four years of age. This young man came to Paris at the conclusion of the last peace, and stayed there a year and a half. He astonished every body by the extent and variety of his knowledge, by the solidity of his judgment and the maturity of his mind. During the whole time of my acquaintance with him, I never heard any subject whatever started, upon which he did not shew, I will not say merely some knowledge, but a great extent of knowledge. Such vast information, such extraordinary merit, in a young man of only twenty, to which may be added the most noble simplicity of character, and a total absence of every thing like conceit and pedantry, did indeed form a very striking contrast with some of our amiable young sparks in red heeled shoes;—with those *beaux* of the fashionable world, who, when the subject of horses and driving, and a new play or opera, is exhausted, have nothing more to say;—nay, it was no trifling contrast even with our fashionables of fifty or sixty, who are scarcely less ignorant. If they, however,

were somewhat piqued, this did not prevent Sir James's society being courted by the best company in Paris, and his enjoying a distinction among them far above his years. This young man was plain in his countenance, and had nothing in his exterior to recommend him; but the rare qualities of his mind more than supplied every other deficiency. His serious turn did not prevent his being fond of poetry, painting, and music, in all which he shewed great taste. He died of an aneurism at the heart. The state of his health never permitted the idea of his enjoying a long life. His passion for study, and the fatigue of mind attendant upon it, may very possibly have contributed to shortening his days. After passing a year and a half at Paris, he returned to Scotland, to try the effect of his native air. He went through Paris again exactly a year ago, in his way to Italy, where he died, to the infinite regret of all who knew him. He told us that he had a younger brother, who was much his superior in every sense of the word. As we do not know this brother, he cannot console us for the loss of Sir James.

The empire of China has become, in these days, a very particular subject of our attention, our study, our researches, and our reasonings. The missionaries first excited the public curiosity on this head, by the wonderful relations they sent

over; and the country was at so remote a distance, that the truth of the relations could not easily be confirmed, or the falsehood of them refuted. The philosophers afterwards took possession of the subject, and drew from it, according to their custom, abundant matter for raising their voices against the abuses, which they were emulous to destroy, at home; and, lastly, the prattlers, imitating the notes of the philosophers, gave a sort of currency to their common-place remarks, by illustrations taken from China. Thus, in a short time, this country became the abode of wisdom, virtue, and happiness; its government was the best upon earth, as well as the most ancient; its morality the finest and purest known; its laws, its police, its arts, its industry, were all so many models for the imitation of every other nation under the sun.

"What a sublime idea!" says one, "what a "powerful spring is that which constitutes pater- "nal authority as the model of the authority of a "government. The whole state, thanks to this "principle, is no longer any thing but one "great family, where all is regulated by mild- "ness and equity, where the governors, the ad- "ministrators, the magistrates are only so many "heads of a great family of children and brothers. "What a country is that in which agriculture is "considered as the first and the most noble of all "professions, and where even the Emperor, on a "certain day in the year, places himself behind

" the plough, and turns up a portion of land, as a
" public tribute of honour to the profession of the
" labourer!—We know in what high esteem the
" study of the law, of learning, and of morality,
" is in China. This alone opens the path to
" places in the government, from the lowest to
" the highest. The morality of Confucius merits,
" according to what is universally allowed, as high
" eulogiums as Christians lavish upon the morality
" of the Gospel. If the people have their super-
" stitions, if their bonzes stuff them with fables
" and absurdities, the whole body of the literati,
" all those who are connected with the govern-
" ment, are thoroughly enlightened, and are
" either complete Atheists, or else only acknow-
" ledge the existence of one supreme God. The
" excessive population of the empire, compared
" with which our Europe is but a desert, suffices
" to prove infallibly that the Chinese are the hap-
" piest and the wisest people upon the earth.
" They are not, indeed, warlike; and they have
" been subdued: but see the force and power of
" their laws and their morals, the conquerors were
" obliged to adopt them, and to submit to them.
" Considering all these advantages, if the Chinese,
" after the example of the Jewish hordes, should
" choose to give themselves out as the favoured
" people of God, to the exclusion of all other
" nations, it would be no easy matter to dispute
" this privilege with them."

It must be acknowledged that a mind of any solidity, accustomed to reflection, and formed by experience, which does not suffer itself to be led away by high-sounding phrases, will not be seduced by this brilliant picture;—such a mind knows too well how much facts in general differ from speculations. He would not absolutely set himself up to pronounce all that is said by these panegyrists of China false, but he would feel wise doubts of its truth. He would not rest his doubts either upon the authority of Lord Anson, who might have written under the influence of ill-humour at not being very well-received, and at being cheated by the Chinese; neither would he rely implicitly on the testimony of John Bell, whose narrative was translated last winter, and whose authority seems of so much the more weight, as he distrusts, with great modesty, his own information, and repeatedly makes apologies for having seen things in such a point of view. A wise man would suspend his judgment, he would wish to pass some twenty years in China, and examine things a little himself before he should form any very decided opinion.

He would say, "Where is the government, "the principles of which are not founded in "equity, in mildness, upon the finest terms in the "language?—Read the edicts of all the emperors, "and all the kings upon the earth, and you will "see that they are all the fathers of their people, "and are only occupied with the happiness of their

" children. Yet every where, in every nation " upon the globe, we see injustice and unhappiness " prevail and abound. It is a fine institution in " theory, to establish superintendants upon super- " intendants, watching over each other, and ren- " dering each the guardian of the other's virtue " and honour; it is only a pity that these superin- " tendants are but men, consequently accessible " to all the corruptions, to all the weaknesses of " human nature. It is not physically impossible " that the mandarins, who are clothed with pater- " nal authority over the people, may be men of " integrity and virtue; but it is morally to be " feared, that not being able to assume, with the " authority of a father, the feelings of one, there " may be many among them who consult nothing " but their own private interests, and are cheats, " rogues, tyrants, full of rapacity, and wholly in- " different to the welfare of those under them, as " is the case with numbers of mandarins in Eu- " rope. This, I say, is much to be feared; but " it may, notwithstanding, be very possible that, " out of a hundred, one may be found who is a " thoroughly honest man, who has even principle " enough to suffer himself to be driven from his " place by his brethren, rather than become the " partner of their iniquities.

" It must be owned, that it is a fine idea to " place the Emperor once in every year behind " the plough; but it may happen that, after the

" manner of many ceremonies and etiquettes in " Europe, it is nothing but a mere custom, which " has no influence whatever on the public mind. " I defy any one to produce a finer ceremony " than that by which the Doge of Venice declares " himself every year the spouse of the Adriatic " Sea. With what elevation, what activity, what " useful pride must this ceremony have inspired the " Venetians, when they were really the sovereigns " of the seas. At present it is only a show, al- " most a ridiculous one, and produces no other " effect to the public, than that of drawing a great " concourse of company to the fair of the Ascen- " sion."

It would be easy to examine, according to these principles of sound criticism, all the other advantages imputed to China, and to draw from them very legitimate reasons, at least, for doubting. The system of morals established by Confucius is not more perfect than that of Zoroaster or of Socrates. Where do we find a civilized nation which has not had its sages and its legislators? If the people of China are full of superstitious notions and practices, what advantage have they over us? —The result is, that the people are every where the people. This empire has been subdued, but, we are told, the conquerors were obliged to adopt the laws and customs of the conquered. Yes, as the Romans adopted the deities of the countries they conquered, but they were not the less abso-

lute masters of the soil, and of the inhabitants. The smaller number are always obliged to conform to the habits of the greater; but what signifies it to them adopting a parcel of customs wholly indifferent, provided they make their authority respected. None but Christians ever were so absurd as to prefer depopulating and devastating a country, involving it in complete ruin, and reigning over a desert, to allowing the conquered people their religion and their habits. I will speak in another place of the immense population of China, and examine whether that be as infallible a token of the goodness of the government, and of the public prosperity, as the greater part of our political writers would make us believe. It is sufficient to observe here, that in retrenching from the Chinese population the exaggerations, which every reflecting man must suspect, there will be nothing extraordinary in it, considering that the climate of the country is hot, and that, in such a climate, the wants of the people are few. I will readily believe that fewer infants die in China than in our European countries, although the constitutions of those among us, who have resisted the rigours of the climate, will be in general stronger than those who live under a milder sky. But I must laugh at those who would persuade me that, in China, children are destroyed in the same manner that we destroy kittens and puppies. The population of India is immense, but I never heard it cited as a

proof of the happiness of these people, or of the goodness of their governments. It is, that we know much more of the people of India than of those of China. The latter, distrustful, tricking, and imposing, never suffer strangers in their country but for purposes of trade, which affords a fine opportunity for our compilers of systems to display all the resources of their fertile imaginations. Let it be observed, that from the days of Bacchus to our own, all those who have conquered India have done so without changing the religion, the laws, the manners, or the customs of these people; yet who will cite this as a proof of the goodness of these institutions?

To establish any facts concerning China, without having seen and examined the country with our own eyes, we ought to be in possession of some monuments of their literature. A single one of their books, however bad, would teach us more than all the narratives of the missionaries. But we have nothing, except some unconnected extracts, given us by Father du Halde, the most important of which is the tragedy of the *Orphan of the House of Tchao*, which M. de Voltaire has since brought upon the French stage.

A complete Chinese romance has just appeared, which bears all the characters of authenticity. This romance was originally translated into English, by a man in the service of the English East India Company, who having resided for a long

time at Canton, applied himself to the study of the Chinese language, and undertook the translation in question, as a sort of exercise. This was in the year 1719; he afterwards returned to England, where he died in 1736. The romance has only lately been published in London; and M. Eidous has translated it into bad French, according to his custom. It is extremely curious and interesting, though certainly not from the colouring, of which there is not the slightest trace;—notwithstanding this, it attracts, it interests, and it is impossible to throw it aside. There is even a sort of flatness in it, but of that sort which is altogether precious to a man of taste; which makes us better acquainted with the genius and manners of the Chinese, than all the writings of Father du Halde. Some extracts from this Father, and other travellers, are given in the way of notes, to explain customs, without the knowledge of which the reader could never understand the work.

Tchichung-u is a sort of Chinese Don Quixote, a redresser of wrongs, a repairer of injuries; but you will see what is the genius and turn of Chinese heroism. Chastity and continence must necessarily enter as essential features into the work. The heroine of the romance, the amiable Shueyping-sin, is a charming personage. Besides the chastity and virtue, which are the peculiar characteristics of her sex in all countries in the world, she pos-

sesses, in a supreme degree, judgment, penetration, craft, which are qualities highly valued by the Chinese. She is quite a being to turn a man's head. I cannot reproach her persecutor for loving her to distraction; I can only impute to him as a reproach, the odious means he employs to obtain her.

For the rest, when you have read this book, you will decide upon the goodness of the Chinese government, and the charms of Chinese manners; and you will see whether we poor devils in Europe ought to endure for a moment such people being held up to us as models. It will not do to say, that this romance is a very flat and poor work, held in no estimation among the Chinese themselves. Besides that a man cannot fairly be supposed to have selected a work of no credit and reputation for translation, it is unimportant for obtaining a knowledge of the manners of a country, and the turn of the public mind, whether the work be good or bad. Let the Chevalier de Mouhy fill his novels with the most impertinent fictions, let him put me ever so much out of humour with his poverty of genius,—still, at five or six thousand leagues distance, or five or six thousand years hence, his works will be invaluable, because they will give so much choice information with respect to the manners of our nation, to its religion and modes of worship, to the government, and to the private lives of the French. However

impertinent may be his fictions, he will never introduce a gentleman, suffering himself to be caned, because that is contrary to the manners of a gentleman.

Some day I will make an apology in all due form for flat and bad works; they are of immense value to a person of an investigating spirit. As a means of knowing the state of the public mind at Rome immediately after the loss of liberty, the incomprehensible spirit of degradation into which it fell, even comparing it with the epoch of expiring liberty to which it succeeded directly,—to obtain this knowledge, I say, if I were to choose between Tacitus on the one side, and Suetonius with other writers of the same stamp, on the other, I should not hesitate for a moment, Tacitus would be sacrificed. "What!" there are persons who will perhaps exclaim, "Sacrifice that profound genius? and for whom!"—Yes; for the man of genius makes himself master of his picture, and presents it to us under whatever face he pleases, whereas the ordinary writer is subjected to it, and represents every thing in its true and homely guise, divested of all ornament. Whoever places any value on the progress of sound criticism, ought to put up their prayers for the preservation of such kind of works.

One thing I must remark, that if what I have read in some *Travels in Russia* be true, the marriage ceremonies observed among the Russians are

very much the same as those of the Chinese; this is an observation not to be passed over. It may be, however, after all, that this Chinese romance, as it is called, is but an imposition, that it is a mere supposititious work. In good truth, if this should be the case, I call upon the impostor to come forth and shew himself; if he be an European, I shall consider him as one of the greatest geniuses now in existence. He will have created a system of manners totally foreign to any in Europe, a system well knit together in all its parts, and bearing the strongest impression of truth. This is certainly no trifling effort.

To the romance is added the *Argument of a Comedy*, which was played at Canton in the year 1719. The Comedy must have been bad enough, to judge by this sketch; but such pieces must always be considered as valuable in the light of exhibiting faithful pictures of manners, and as leading to important inductions relative to the customs and domestic lives of the Chinese. The sketch is followed by some *fragments of Chinese poetry*, and lastly, we have a tolerably ample collection of *Chinese proverbs and apothegms*. These will all confirm the idea, that the Chinese are a people without any energy or elevation of mind, and that their morals are very well suited to a herd of timid and oppressed slaves.

October, 1766.

The Chevalier de Lorenzi, brother to the Count de Lorenzi, who was for a long time minister from Florence at the Court of France, and who is just dead;—this Chevalier, though a Florentine, is in the French service. He is one of the most extraordinary originals that can be imagined; full of honour and candour, mild in the highest degree, and very well informed; but all is so jumbled together in his head, that when the fancy takes him to enter upon an explanation of any thing, he stumbles and flounders in such a manner, that it is almost impossible to avoid bursting into an immoderate fit of laughter; it is utterly out of the question for any body but himself to guess what he can mean. In absence he is at least equal to that M. de Brancas, of the last century, of whom Madame de Sevigné relates so many amusing anecdotes. Madame Geoffrin haranguing to us one day on the subject of awkwardness, cited, as examples, the Chevalier de Lorenzi and M. de Burigny, who were both present, observing, that the one was awkward in mind, the other in body, and her sermon was principally rested on these two points. Add to these things, that the Chevalier de Lorenzi speaks with great reflection and solemnity, and that his Italian accent gives an additional relish to every thing he says.—Now attend.

A few years ago, this Chevalier was obliged to go to Lyons upon some business. M. de La Michaudière was then Intendant of the place, and the Chevalier almost immediately upon his arrival supped in company with him at the house of the commandant. Among the company was an intimate friend of the Intendant's, who addressed him several times familiarly La Michaudière. The Chevalier imagining that this man called him *l'ami Chaudière*, addressed him all the evening as M. Chaudière, nor could any thing that the rest of the company could say or do make him comprehend that he was mangling the name and transforming it into one which sounded perfectly ludicrous*. The next day he was invited to supper at M. de La Michaudière's, where he met a large company, and among others M. Le Normant, a farmer-general, the husband of Madame de Pompadour, who was passing through Lyons. This gentleman was seated at table opposite to the Chevalier, when the latter enquired of his next neighbour who that was opposite to him; to which the neighbour answered in a whisper, "*the husband of Madame de Pompadour*," on

* *Chaudière* signifies in French a vast *cistern* or *cauldron* with a furnace underneath for boiling large quantities of certain things, such as soap, tallow, &c. &c. *L'ami Chaudière* would, therefore, have much the same effect in France, as if in England one person were to call another, *Friend Cauldron*.—*Translator*.

which the Chevalier immediately addressed him as M. de Pompadour, nor could be prevented calling him so the whole evening. The embarrassment of the company was extreme, but to rectify the error was impossible. An excellent Lorenziana might be collected; for whatever the worthy Chevalier says and does is impressed with the same originality. I am exceedingly indebted to him, for he makes me laugh more than any man I ever knew.

For some little time past we have had here a certain M. Pomme, who calls himself a physician, from Arles, and who pretends to cure all the ladies of Paris of their vapours; he has already under his care some of the most afflictive cases in this way, and there is no doubt that he will in a short time be quite the rage. This is an excellent trade; no risk is incurred in carrying it on, and an adept in it can scarcely fail of making a fortune; the exact proportion of his gains will depend much upon the greater or less quantity of assurance that he possesses, upon the degree of confidence with which he can lye. The celebrated Printemps, a soldier in the French guards, was very much in fashion a few years ago. His grand specific was a decoction, which was administered to all by whom he was consulted, and which was neither more nor less than hay boiled with water. He regarded his

patients as all *bêtes* *, and he was not much mistaken. This decoction of hay soon furnished him with the means of making such ample provisions of his material, that he could spare enough of it dry, to nourish and support two horses, and these in return were so obliging as to draw a very fine coach, in which he went to visit his patients, while many a regular votary of the faculty was obliged to pace the streets on foot. This same faculty, in consequence, presented a humble request to Marshal Biron, that he would oblige Printemps to lay down his new equipage, and reserve all his hay for his patients; but his patients had by this time grown tired of it, and so the matter ended.

It is only about three months ago that we received at Paris any intimation of the quarrel which has taken place between Jean Jacques Rousseau and Mr. Hume. It has afforded excellent pastime for the idle, nor could a declaration of war between any two of the great powers of Europe have made more talk than this private quarrel. It seems, however, to be at Paris alone that the public mind is so much occupied by it; in London, where there are more important actors

* *Bêtes*, which in French properly means *beasts*, is also used as a term to express a very silly person. The author, therefore, here plays upon the word, so that it was necessary to retain the French in the text, and not translate it, or the joke would have been wholly destroyed.—*Translator*

to hiss, the citizen of Geneva is overlooked, and the Londoners are altogether absorbed in weighty speculations upon the formation of a new ministry, and upon the great name of William Pitt being swallowed up in the title of Earl of Chatham. If this be mortifying to the citizen's vanity, it will be some consolation to know, that among us, for at least a week, and a week is a long time for the Parisian public to be occupied with the same thing; the citizen, I say, may be consoled with knowing, that for a week, at least, every other topic of conversation was lost in this one, and the most flattering hopes were entertained that the antagonists would soon decide the matter by a regular combat.

The partisans of Jean Jacques were at first a little mortified and confounded at a stroke so unforeseen. Hitherto all those with whom the citizen had quarrelled, after receiving the greatest kindnesses from them, and these are not few in number, had been always condemned by his party, without even the form of a trial. The greater the forbearance practised towards the illustrious Jean Jacques, the less these quondam friends descended to arraigning his conduct, the more they were suspected by his devoted admirers; nay, they were often even loudly accused of having been guilty of heavy wrongs towards him. The same turn could not be given to this new quarrel with David Hume. The joy felt at the connection between him and

Jean Jacques was too recent; the admirers had joined so warmly in the reciprocal compliments with which the new friends loaded each other; they had felt so assured, that the long duration of this friendship would afford them a formidable argument against the ancient enemies of their idol, that they knew not what to say, what turn to give the matter. The integrity, the good nature, and the kind dispositions of Mr. Hume were, besides, so well known in France, these partisans had, themselves, boasted so eagerly of the pains taken by him to make Rousseau happy and comfortable in England, that they could scarcely, in their hearts, suppose any fault in him, and yet, all on a sudden, a violent quarrel had sprung up between them;—indeed, if the good David himself was to be believed, Jean Jacques had behaved to him in a manner the most extraordinary and outrageous. In short, the whole business was one of great perplexity.

The details of the affair, one of the strangest and most extravagant, but also one of the least interesting, that memory ever preserved to mankind, were soon confusedly known; and they were talked of with a great diversity of opinions, most of which chance alone dictated. Mr. Hume addressed the principal part of what he had to say on the subject to M. d'Alembert, who, to the great surprise of every body, was implicated in it. Rousseau, on his side, addressed a letter to a bookseller at Paris, which I have not seen, though

the man of books has made it very public: in it Mr. Hume is challenged to produce the letters written to him by Rousseau; and, it is said, that this challenge has been repeated in the public papers in London. Mr. Hume, in consequence, determined to publish the whole correspondence that had passed on the occasion; and it has just appeared, under the title of, *A succinct Exposition of the Dispute which has arisen between Mr. Hume and M. Rousseau, with all the Documents necessary to illustrate the Affair.* It is a pamphlet, in 12mo. of about a hundred and thirty pages.

M. Suard is the translator and editor of this work. I know not why he says, in his advertisement, that Mr. Hume has yielded, with no small repugnance, to the solicitations of his friends, in making this matter public. He must undoubtedly here speak of his friends in England, since, among those on this side of the water, I know of many who have written expressly to dissuade him from rendering the matter public. In fact, I pity, with all my heart, one who is really forced to make an appeal, to the world at large, on a private concern of his own: he who makes such an appeal, without the strongest necessity, I consider as a fool. Be sure, that the malignity of mankind will only seek to laugh at your expence, and that they are perfectly indifferent as to which party is in the right, and which is in the wrong. This indifference is not, indeed, so much in opposition to natural jus-

tice, but that it may easily be defended. By what title do you consider yourself as a personage of sufficient importance, to expect that I should waste my time upon your quarrels? If the grievances you complain of are amenable to the law, carry your complaints into a court of justice; if noble and generous conduct on your part have drawn you, from the contemptible conduct of your adversary, into a quarrel, which the laws have no power to punish, will it not be said that you are much to be pitied? Be satisfied that you have acted honourably, and learn to despise the idle opinions of a babbling world. But it is written in the law and in the prophets, that every man shall fight with the weapons of his own trade; and that authors shall consequently settle their differences by strokes of the pen, as the military settle theirs by strokes of the sword. Mr. Hume, who has long resisted the general mania of mankind to be meddling with iron, at length finds himself compelled to yield to it, principally, according to all appearance, from the fear of being favoured with a legacy among the testamentary bequests of Jean Jacques. But the number of worthy and honest men, who will probably be legatees to the citizen of Geneva in the same way, is likely to be so great, that the philosopher of Scotland, in my opinion, might have satisfied his mind in determining to run the risk with them. Be this as it

may, the *Exposition* cannot fail of a very great sale.

I shall not permit myself to pass any decided judgment upon this strange affair. With regard to Mr. Hume, though I have seen enough of him to be able, in some sort, to appreciate his real value, yet I have not the honour of being united with him in such ties of friendship, as to render my judgment partial. The case is different with Rousseau. I was united in the strictest bonds of friendship with him for more than eight years; and I know him, perhaps, too well, not to distrust myself, when the question is to pass a rigorous judgment upon any act or deed of his. It is now exactly nine years since I found myself obliged to break off all intercourse with him, although I had nothing to reproach him with, as to what regarded me personally, and he had never, during the whole time of our intimacy, uttered a reproachful word towards me. But probity and justice left me no choice, except either wholly to break with him, or to betray the truth, by disguising my sentiments, in a way perfectly dishonourable, upon a subject, in which he, very ill-advisedly, would constitute me the judge. Not but that, upon some grounds, I might have judged the matter with perfect safety, since it was one in which I was myself no way concerned; it was, in fact, a much more absurd affair than that with

Mr. Hume. I have always thought, that to utter revolting sentiments to a man, in the hope that he will approve them; that, at least, he will listen to them, and pass them over in silence, is to fail essentially and unpardonably towards him. It is neither more nor less than to say, I flatter myself, that you have no sense whatever of real honour or delicacy; and I know not how any one can be guilty of a greater offence towards another. Let a man be mad, I know that it must be so; but I expect him, even in his paroxysms of madness, not to transgress the rules of good breeding. For the rest, M. Rousseau is the only friend, the loss of whom I ever had to regret, without, at the same time, having to regret his death. He has quarrelled successively with all his friends, and been reconciled, and quarrelled with them again. In one of his letters he allows, that he is often changing his friends, yet he insists that there are some, whose friendship he has retained even for five-and-twenty or thirty years. I believe, however, he would be much embarrassed to name the person with whom he had preserved an uninterrupted friendship of ten years: for we cannot give the title of *friend* to a man, formerly known to us even very intimately, without our having, for years, been able to keep up the connection; the circumstances of our lives having separated us, so that we were become nearly strangers to each other. Such a friendship may possibly, after this long interval,

be renewed; but I could never reckon the interval as forming any part of the period of our friendship.

I believe also, that Jean Jacques has very serious reproaches to make himself with regard to his conduct towards many of his former friends: in this number I do not, however, include myself. I never had, like many of them, the opportunity of serving him essentially; he could, therefore, never be more than unjust, he could not be accused of ingratitude with regard to me; and I pardon him willingly, a little gall towards a man whom he had unfortunately placed in a situation that compelled his displaying the truth to him with too little management. It is not the less certain, that since this breach I never spoke ill of him to any one; I hold such a respect and forbearance to be due to all connections in like manner broken off. I have associated with people who did not love him, with people indifferent about him, with enthusiastic admirers of him, but never departed from my principle. I have often been assured, that Rousseau does not practice equal forbearance with regard to me; that he endeavours to injure me in the minds of all who will listen to him: and there are never wanting a sufficient number always ready to listen to calumnies. Nay, his accusations are the more calculated to injure me, since, by never stating any thing specific, he gives reason to suppose that he

has heavy charges indeed against me. Yet I can say with pride, that none of these considerations ever made me deviate from my principle; I have even had grace enough rather to consider Rousseau's conduct as a proof, involuntarily given, of his esteem for me. In effect he knows well that the advantage would be very greatly on my side if I were to make an appeal to the public; I should, in such a case, produce documents much more curious than those published by Mr. Hume. But he judges rightly, that I shall never present myself before the public as his accuser, in spite of the honour that might accrue to me from supporting a character in such a farce, by the side of the immortal Jean Jacques. He, besides, probably suspects that I laugh at the opinion of his devotees, to whom I never gave any reason for thinking ill of me; and here again he is right.

In consequence of the plan of conduct which I have thus laid down to myself, and which I cannot cease thinking an excellent one, without ceasing to be myself, had I been in Mr. Hume's place, on receiving the *mild*, *complacent*, and *polite* letter of the twenty-third of June, which I had so little reason to expect, I should first have rubbed my eyes well to satisfy myself that they did not deceive me; then remaining awhile astonished and confounded, I should have fixed my eyes on that same letter, with the same steady and prolonged gaze as on that terrible and memor-

able day, when first I saw the writer. But this moment of surprize past, I should have put the letter in my pocket; on the morrow, I should have written to my friend Jean Jacques, to make my acknowledgements for the good opinion with which he honoured me, and the motives to which he was pleased to attribute my services and my endeavours to render him happy, and I should then have bade him adieu for the rest of his illustrious life. The next day I should have thought no more about the affair, or if, in spite of myself, I found it still give me some uneasiness, I would have written to Madame de Boufflers, to thank her for having fastened so amiable a being upon me. But neither the day following, nor any other day in the year, would I have consented to make the public the confidents of a difference in which they have no concern whatever.

The persons whose names are not given in the *Exposition* are the Countess de Boufflers and the Marchioness de Verdelin. The latter is the same lady that went to visit Rousseau last year at Moëtier Travers. The great prince is the Prince de Conti; the person of high distinction who visited Rousseau in London, without being known to him, was the Hereditary Prince of Brunswick. M. Tronchin was formerly, according to the citizen's testimony, the greatest physician in Europe; I have seen his patent as such, more than once, signed by the hand of Jean Jacques himself, and

I believe he is recorded under the same designation in some of his writings. But since M. Tronchin has had the audacity to be angry at seeing the tranquillity of his country disturbed by the *Letters from the Mountains*, a sentiment which no one can feel without being the mortal enemy of Rousseau, he has been justly deprived of his patent; and instead of being the greatest physician of Europe, is become, as all the world knows, a mere quack. All talents, all virtue, every good quality, depend upon the good or bad terms on which a man is with our citizen.

Considering his famous letter to Mr. Hume only as a literary performance, his friends assert it to be a masterpiece of eloquence; the peroration more especially, they say, is highly pathetic. But they forget that true eloquence consists principally in giving to every subject the tone which properly belongs to it. If you treat poor and nonsensical things with a solemnity and emphasis that belong only to the most high-wrought tragedy, you may perhaps be thought eloquent, but you must also be thought mad. Don Quixote, who mistook windmills for giants, and engaged in a dreadful combat against them, was certainly full of the most noble courage and heroism; but he was even more ridiculous than valiant. For my part, the noble flourishes given with the sword when raised against the windmills, affect me so little, that I prefer Mr. Horace Walpole's letter

to Mr. Hume, to any other in the collection, since this letter has a great deal of character in it, and I value character highly.

To conclude, I think nobody can read dispassionately the statement given by Mr. Hume, without pitying the unhappy Jean Jacques very sincerely; since, if he be guilty of deep offences towards his friends, it must be owned, that he punishes himself for them very severely; and what a deplorable life must that be which is wasted in such painful follies and turmoils. I defy his bitterest enemy to give him, in his present situation, any advice more fatal than the part he has voluntarily taken upon himself, of quarrelling with Mr. Hume, without the shadow of a reason. I was always persuaded that he judged very ill in preferring England to any other asylum, but did not expect a revolution so strange and so sudden. It is easy to foresee that he will not long reside in the delicious abode of Wootton, and that the first reform will fall upon the dear friend Davenport, the next upon the English nation; but it is not easy to predict in what corner of the earth the friend Jean Jacques may end his days tranquilly. It appears clear to a demonstration, that he carries about with him a companion which will never suffer him to remain tranquil any where. He will have a soothing satisfaction for some time, at least, in preparing a *not succinct* answer to the *Succinct Exposition*. If I am not very much

mistaken in my conjectures, he among his friends or enemies, who has not a good cuff in the answer, may think he has had a lucky escape.

Jean Jacques has come into the world two centuries too late. His true vocation was that of a reformer; and he would have shewn as much mildness in his reforms as Jean Chauvin Picard. In the sixteenth century, he would have been the founder of a sect of Roussavians or Jean-Jacquists. But in this age proselyte-making is out of fashion, nor can the most eloquent writing move the lazy wretch who reads, to lay down the book and join the train of the sermonizer.

M. de Voltaire has not been entirely silent in the quarrel between Rousseau and Mr. Hume. He has printed a short letter, addressed to the latter, which has given the *coup-de-grâce*, as it were, to Jean Jacques. This letter has had a great run at Paris; and has, perhaps, done more injury to Rousseau than Mr. Hume's publication. It is written with much gaiety.

Rousseau, after reading the *Succinct Exposition*, wrote to his bookseller at Paris, that he thought Mr. Hume's tone very insulting for a good man, and very noisy for a philosopher; and he besides thought the editor very audacious. Not a word farther does he say by way of explanation. It appears, that his strongest partisans among persons of distinction, that is to say, the

Prince de Conti, and the Countess de Boufflers, have taken the part of Mr. Hume very decidedly. If Rousseau were wise he would suffer the recollection of this absurd and detestable quarrel to die away in silence, without saying another word upon the subject; and rather occupy himself on some new work of genius, the brilliance of which might soon efface every recollection of his faults and follies.

Madame Geoffrin's journey to Warsaw has been a subject of entertainment and curiosity to the public during the whole summer. Its success, for success justifies every thing, has silenced all her censors. The handsome reception she experienced at Vienna is known; she is returned in the best health possible, as little fatigued as if she returned only from a walk. Thus what appeared ridiculous, and even rash, is become on a sudden, according to custom, fine and interesting. In the month of May last, it was an inconceivable thing, that a woman of sixty-eight, who had scarcely ever set her foot beyond the jurisdiction of Paris, should venture on a journey of eleven hundred leagues, without being constrained to it by the most unavoidable necessity. In the present month of November, it has become a most courageous undertaking, a most delightful scheme, a proof of singular interest in, and attachment to the king of Poland. Idle people have an astonishing mania

for judging things by sixes and sevens, if I may be allowed that expression. I never could comprehend how people could be so very eager and ardent in applauding or condemning things which do not concern them in any way, and which ought in all justice to be left entirely to the fancies of the individuals whom alone they regard. Since Madame Geoffrin's return, a series of her letters, during her absence, has been handed about, and any one who has not read them, is now scarcely fit to go into good company.

Answer of Madame Geoffrin, to a Letter written to her at Warsaw, by the Abbé de Breteuil, Chancellor to the Duke of Orleans.

On looking over the scrawl, a greater scrawl than can well be imagined, of my charming neighbour,* I could not forbear exclaiming, "One "may see that he has taken infinite pains to "make this production perfect in its kind." I was in some sort prepared for a chef-d'œuvre, since I had previously been informed, that the noble writer had actually been seen mending a pen in order that he might surpass himself. But, indeed, there was no occasion to have taken so much trouble, the first cat's paw that he could

* M de Breteuil was celebrated for writing such a scrawl, that there was scarcely a possibility of decypher:ng it.

have laid his hands upon would have answered his purpose equally well.

In order to give this beautiful specimen of penmanship all the celebrity it merits, I spread it out upon a table, and cried, "Hasten hither all "ye princes and princesses, ye palatines and "palatinesses, ye castellans and castellanas, ye "starosts and starostinas, people all, in short, "hasten hither, here is a hieroglyphic to explain, "and six ducats reward for it."—All the states arrived, but my ducats are still safe in my pocket. To whom could I next apply, except to the sorcerers; but the sorcerers of modern days have so very little of the sorcerer in them, that I am afraid this again would have been only time and labour lost. Well then, nothing remained but to address myself to my own heart, and this heart which is so clear-sighted, which feels so sensibly whatever is calculated to touch it, gave me the clue immediately, and shewed me that what was wholly illegible to the eyes, was very legible to her. She assured me that those spider's legs were expressive of the tenderest assurances of friendship from my kind and good neighbour. What then could I do better than to charge this excellent decypherer to repay those assurances in kind; that she does most sincerely.

Letter from M. de Voltaire.

November 3, 1766.

I received your letter of the twenty-sixth, my dear and good friend. You do not mention what is thought by the public in general, of the folly and ingratitude of Jean Jacques. They seem to have discovered a strain of eloquence in his extravagant letter to Mr. Hume. The taste of men of letters, in these days, is then very false and erroneous; do they not know that the first principle of good writing is to suit the style to the subject? 'tis the excess of impertinence to affect big-sounding words when writing of petty things. Rousseau's letter to Mr. Hume is as ridiculous as M. Chicaneau would be speaking in the elevated strain of Cinna or Augustus. It is very plain that our quack, in writing his letter, always had the intention of making it public. Art is evident in every line; nothing can be clearer than that it is a work written with reflection, and intended for the public eye. The rage for writing and printing has seized him so strongly, that he thinks the world, enchanted with his style, will pardon the blackness of the procedure. He has, therefore, not hesitated to calumniate his benefactor, in the hope that his false eloquence will varnish over the infamy of his conduct.

The madman, as he is, has treated me with even greater scurrility than he has treated Mr. Hume. He accused me to the Prince de Conti

and the Duchess de Luxembourg, of having had him condemned at Geneva, and with having driven him away from Switzerland. He says the same thing in England to every body who will listen to him. 'Tis not that he believes it himself, but he wishes to throw odium upon me. And why would he throw odium upon me?—because he has wronged me; because, some years ago, he wrote me several insolent and absurd letters in reply to an offer I made him in kindness, of a country-house I had near Geneva. He is the most malignant madman that exists. An ape who bites the person that feeds it, is more reasonable and humane.

As I find myself implicated in the accusation against Mr. Hume, I have been obliged to write to this estimable philosopher, and give him a concise detail of all that I have done for Jean Jacques, and of his ingratitude towards me. I will send you a copy of the letter. In the mean time I beg the favour of you to shew M. d'Alembert what I have now written. He has considered himself as obliged to justify his character against the accusation of Jean Jacques, that he (M. d'Alembert) had turned him into ridicule. The accusations which he has urged against me, for two years past, are of a more serious nature. I should be a barbarian if I had, in fact, persecuted Rousseau; but I should be a fool if I did not take this opportunity of confuting and confounding him, and of

proving irrefutably that he is one of the most malignant rascals that ever disgraced literature.

January, 1767.

Every one knows the story of the apple shot by William Tell from the head of his son. According to this history, Griesler, or some other bailiff, had stuck his hat up in the market-place, and ordered that the same honours should be paid to it as to himself. William Tell had the courage to resist so absurd and insulting an order. Arrested and condemned to death, the tyrant granted his life; but as he passed for one of the best marksmen in the country, he required him to shoot an apple from the head of his son. Tell submitted to this cruel sentence, and had the good fortune to hit the apple without touching the youth. The bailiff then observed that he had a second arrow in his hand, and asked him for what purpose it was destined. Tell, driven to despair, answered that it was prepared to shoot him through the heart, if any injury had happened to his son. Without pausing to remark on the little probability of these facts, or to examine whether a father, reduced to such a dreadful extremity, would not have aimed the first arrow at the heart of the monster who placed his son in such a situation, I shall only observe that this history is preserved as a popular tradition in other countries. If I am not mistaken, Saxo-Grammaticus relates it as a circumstance

which had happened in Denmark more than a century before the æra of Helvetic liberty.

Be this as it may, M. Lemierre has lately brought the story upon the stage, and the tragedy of *William Tell* was recently performed at the French Theatre. Its success must naturally depend less on the courage of the hero than on the merit of the poet, and as the latter is of a very moderate description, the name of the hero will, after some fleeting representations, disappear entirely from its new station on the theatre. If we cannot admire the great strength of M. Lemierre's genius, we must at least render justice to its fecundity, for this is the third tragedy of his manufacture which has been accomplished within less than two years. The tragedy of *Barnevelt*, which waits the licence of the police to receive the honours of coming before the public; the tragedy of *Artaxerxes*, from the lyric drama of Metastasio, which had some lingering representations last summer, and now that of *William Tell* which may possibly be played six or seven times.

The author has, in this latter piece, strictly followed the chronicle; he adheres to the facts such as they are related with a scrupulous exactitude altogether whimsical in a poet. William Tell is in the tragedy, as in the history, the deliverer of Switzerland. To his wife, the author has given the name of Cleofea; I know not, and cannot conceive, on what ground he has chosen

to bestow a Greek name upon her, and it may naturally excite a doubt whether she ever was properly baptized. Probably her name was Ursula or Gertrude, and M. Lemierre has done very ill in changing a Christian name, for one that is no where to be found in the calendar. Tell's son has no name given to him, since he does not speak. Melchthal, Werner, and Furst, are three friends of Tell's, who conspire with him for the liberation of their country. The bailiff, whom M. Lemierre has decorated with the title of governor, is called by him Gesler, and a certain M. Ulric, commandant of the guard, is his confident.

I confess that I did not attend the first representation of this piece with any prepossession in its favour. I had been assured, that there was not a word in it offensive to the House of Austria, and this appeared to me extremely polite on the parts of Melchthal, Werner, and Furst. Persuaded besides, that if the poet had preserved to his heroes the simple and rustic language that a man of taste would desire, the actors never would have condescended to perform the characters, and that if he had put into their mouths any sentiments breathing the genuine and energetic sentiments of liberty, the police would have desired him to lock up his piece in his drawer;—persuaded of these things, I will own, I could not help thinking, that a tragedy of William Tell, written with so much prudence and circumspection, must be

a chef-d'œuvre of dullness and insipidity. Prudence and circumspection are, of all the virtues that a poet may think proper to adopt, those which will procure him the least veneration.

I shall not dissect this piece through the five acts, but shall go at once to the conclusion.—Tell, who has already raised the whole Canton against his oppressors, appears on the top of some rocks. Perceiving Gesler climbing after him, he takes his bow, and aiming at the tyrant, pierces him through the heart; the latter falls from the place he had reached, and lights, dead, upon a bed in the rock, which seems to have been prepared expressly to receive him. At this stroke, the inhabitants assemble from all sides, and in a moment, Tell, on the top of his rock, is surrounded by his friends, while his wife, his son, Melchthal, Werner, and Furst appear below on the plain. It is obvious, that the poet has depended very much for the success of his piece upon this picture, and indeed if the art of constructing a tragedy consisted, like that of a magic lantern, in disposing a number of figures in picturesque groupes and attitudes, M. Lemierre might be styled the Sophocles of France. The funeral oration of Gesler, stretched on his bed of stone, is pronounced by William Tell, and this is the only honour paid to the deceased. His death is the signal for liberty. The people who are assembled are informed, that Werner has raised its standard in a neigh-

bouring Canton. Melchthal proposes to the assembly to unite, and to swear to conquer or die; Tell, from the top of the rock, observes, that *'tis a vow too common,* and proposes another form: *Let us swear to be conquerors, and strictly observe our oath.*

The pit had, however, no opportunity of examining whether or not Tell's formula was superior to Melchthal's, for the moment that Tell had observed *'tis a vow too common,* a voice replied *'tis a little too common,** which amused the whole company so much that they all joined in such a chorus of laughter as effectually to preclude the farther generous sentiments of the Swiss champion from being heard. At the end of the piece the author was eagerly called for, and it is said that M. Lemierre would gladly have shewn himself if he had not been prevented by Le Kain. A more important service could not have been rendered him, for if he had appeared, the whole pit would most undoubtedly have laughed in his face. Thus was our author under a double obligation to Le Kain, for the little applause the piece received was owing to him alone. Indeed his was the only character which afforded any scope to an actor's talents. If, however, the other characters are bad, it must

* There is a great deal more wit and point in this repartee in the French than can be given to it in English. Tell says *c'est un vœu trop commun* on which the voice in the pit says *c'est un peu trop commun.*—*Translator.*

also be owned that they were very ill performed. Mademoiselle Dumesnil played the character of Cleofea in a maner that rendered it perfectly ridiculous.

It would be no less superfluous than fatiguing to discuss all the faults of this half formed drama. Happily it is so short that there was not time for the company to be thoroughly wearied, and it was this alone which saved it from a downfall on the first night of representation. What shocked people the most was the character of Gesler; from the excess of its malignity it becomes wholly absurd. It was easy to have found in the detestable policy of Albert, a sufficient motive for all the cruelties practised towards the Swiss. Besides M. Lemierre, if he had possessed a spark of genius, would have felt that to render Gesler formidable and terrible, he should scarcely have appeared in the piece. 'Tis the goodness of a sovereign, or of the representative of a sovereign, that renders him popular and accessible; wickedness pursues a very different course. It dictates its cruel decrees from the inmost recesses of a palace, the doors of which are guarded by suspicion and distrust. In this drama, Gesler is perpetually mingling with the people whom he vexes and oppresses, and is constantly listening to reproaches and sarcasms which he answers with a fury that renders him perfectly ridiculous. We see plainly that M. Lemierre has nothing of the malignity of Albert in his nature,

for Albert would never have sent into Swizerland so stupid a rascal as he has made Gesler. M. Lemierre is indeed a good-hearted man, and is not aware that they who meditate any great wickedness never talk of it. It is a pity that his stile is so harsh, so unequal, so barbarous, and corresponds so ill with the mildness of his manners and the goodness of his heart.

Let us observe, in conclusion, that to render the son of Tell interesting, some character should have been given him in the play. The danger that he runs cannot make us shudder, when we are only shewn a little dumb animal for a couple of minutes. If I had undertaken to treat this fine subject, I should have laid the scene in the inside of Tell's cottage. There I would have exhibited him giving lessons of servitude to his son, in order to bend his mind to the circumstances, or rather the hardships of the times. In the hands of a person of talent this contrast of a citizen simple, poor, proud, generous, without any consciousness of it, preaching to his son docility and submission might have been rendered sublime. I would have endeavoured to render the characters of the son and the mother firm and interesting; and above all, I would have had the revolution effected without any previous conspiracy; it should have been impelled solely by the cruelties of Gesler, and Tell should have procured liberty to Switzerland without having formed any plan for it. If I had succeeded in

making my piece wholly dissimilar to that of M. Lemierre I should have judged it worthy the name of the glorious liberators of Switzerland.

I mentioned, at the time it happened, the purchase of M. Diderot's library by the Empress of Russia, in 1765, with the generous manner in which she left it in his hands, settling upon him a pension of a thousand livres for taking care of it. The first year of this pension was paid in advance, with the capital sum given for the library. In 1766, this pension not having been paid, General Betzky had orders to subjoin to one of his letters the following postcript.

"Her Imperial Majesty having been informed, by a letter which I received from Prince "Galitzin, that M. Diderot's pension, due in "March last, has not been paid, commands "me to say, that, in order to preclude the possibility of negligence on the part of her agents, "causing, in future, any derangement to the "care she wishes taken of her library, has ordered "that twenty-five years' pension shall be paid in "advance; when this term is expired, a new arrangement shall be made. For this purpose, I "send you the enclosed bill of exchange."

This postcript was dated the thirtieth of October, 1766, and enclosed a bill of exchange for twenty-five thousand livres, payable to the order of M. Diderot. I recommend this article, very

earnestly, to the attention of the author of the Commercial Gazette; he will, perhaps, never have again, in his life, to record a bargain of a similar nature. In virtue of this bargain, M. Diderot sells his library, preserving the use and enjoyment of it for his life, at the same time, acquiring an ease in his circumstances which he had never hoped to obtain. Thirty years of literary labour could not procure him the smallest recompence from his own country: it has pleased the Empress of Russia to pay the debt of France; her Majesty, in less than eighteen months, has remitted to this philosopher more than forty thousand livres. I recommend to the manufacturers of historical and chronological abridgments, to search among all their records for the name of any sovereign who has recompensed merit with equal munificence; and, in the manner of doing it, has united so much delicacy and grace with such noble generosity.

A lady one day observed to M. Diderot, that he was happy in the number of delicate things that were addressed to him, since, she said, *the ball goes naturally to him who plays.* Take an example: This philosopher being sometime ago in company with Greuze, the latter made him sit while he sketched his profile. Diderot expected that he should receive this profile as a present from the artist; but he expected, day after day, in vain,

the profile had quitted the painter's work-room, but had not found its way into the philosopher's study. At length, when expectation was almost wearied, and he began to think no more about it, he received the sketch, accompanied with a plate engraved from it, and the first hundred proofs taken off. Underneath the engraving is inscribed, simply, DIDEROT. It is engraved by Saint Aubin, and is, indeed, a very fine specimen of the art. What a pity that it is by no means a strong likeness. A poor dauber, of the *Place Dauphine*, has taken a picture of me in profile, which is an infinitely stronger likeness. It was asked the other day, why historical painters often succeed so ill in taking portraits?—the reply made was, *because it is too difficult.*

We have just lost a physician, by name Renard, of whom one of his flatterers, and there are few persons who have not some flatterers, said one day, that he was the first physician in Paris. "Yes," replied a wit, who was present, "in coming in by the gate of St. Anthony." It happened that M. Renard lived close by that gate.

This M. Renard, once, when he was visiting a patient, found there an old Abbé, with whom he was playing at picquet. M. Renard began immediately to look earnestly at the Abbé, and said to him, "What are you doing here, Sir? go home instantly, for the love of heaven, and get your-

" self bled; you have not a moment to lose." The Abbé, alarmed to the highest degree, was struck motionless. He was carried home, he was bled three or four times, and took an emetic, but he was more alarmingly ill than before. On the third day his brother was sent for from the country; he arrived in great haste, and was told that the Abbé was dying. He enquired eagerly what was his malady, when M. Renard said, that he had had a strong attack of apoplexy, without being himself sensible of it; he (the speaker) had, however, fortunately discovered it, by perceiving the Abbé's mouth all drawn on one side; he had, therefore, hastened to apply the proper remedies, but, he was sorry to say, that they had not proved successful. " I should have been surprised if they " had," said the other, calmly, " for my bro- " ther's mouth has been drawn awry more than " sixty years."—" What do you say?" said M. Renard, taking up his hat and walking off, without waiting to see the effect of an emetic which he had just administered.

Quinault Dufresne, formerly an actor at the French theatre, is just dead at the age of seventy-five. He enjoyed a high reputation in his time, and is the most celebrated comedian we have had since Baron. If I were to form a judgment by what I have heard from various quarters, I should think Dufresne owed more to his external advan-

tages than to his talents. He had a very fine figure, a most charming voice, something in his air very graceful and noble, in short, he possessed in an eminent degree all the requisites that nature can bestow for making a perfect actor. Le Kain has certainly more of the internal qualities required for his profession, he has more feeling, is more pathetic, his tones are more truly tragic, and he affects more deeply; but nature has been very sparing of her bounties to him, and among a people who are enthusiastic for the fine arts: it is rowing very much against the stream, to attempt the profession of an actor without external attractions. I never saw Dufresne, and it is a subject of great regret to me. He quitted the stage early in life, having very indifferent health: it is more than twenty-five years since he withdrew from it. The Quinaults, during his career, made a great figure among the list of performers. Dufresne himself played the high tragic and comic characters; his elder brother Quinault, played also high comic characters; and his youngest sister played the characters of waiting-women. An elder sister had been also upon the stage, but remained there a very short time. These two sisters played afterwards conspicuous parts on the great theatre of the world; both endeavoured to raise themselves, and secure a maintenance, by drawing good company to their houses. The eldest was kept by the late Duke of Orleans, before he was

seized with his turn for devotion; she afterwards lived with the Duke de Nevers, and is now supposed to be privately married to that old nobleman; she has always lived among great people. The younger sister was ambitious of drawing about her not only men of the world, but also men of letters, and every thing possible was done by her to obtain the reputation of a woman of talents. She always appeared, however, to have much more pretension than solidity; in particular, there was nothing of nature in her, all was art. She gave, for some time, regular stated dinners, at which there was a great affectation of wit flying about; nothing can be more fatiguing and dull than these constituted wit-shops; happily the fashion of them is very much gone by. The reign of the younger of these sisters was shorter than that of the elder; such kind of women are phænomena, which never can exist but at Paris: it is a species of ambition peculiar to that capital. But if we could know exactly all the pains and trouble that it cost the sisters of Quinault Dufresne, to acquire and preserve the sort of existence they procured to themselves, we should, perhaps, see with astonishment, that it cost Cromwell less efforts, less exertions, to become master of England.

Dufresne had experienced some disgust from the public, which perhaps contributed, as much as the state of his health, to determine his quitting the stage. One day he began speaking in a very

low tone, as indeed the character he was to play required. The pit cried out several times *louder! louder!* when Dufresne, extremely piqued, said: "*And you, gentlemen, not so loud.*" He was sent to prison, and when suffered to appear again on the stage, was made to ask pardon upon his knees. He submitted, but quitted the stage six months after. In this he did well. They who treat their men of talents like slaves, are not worthy to have any such among them, nor can degrading the votaries of the fine arts ever be the means of making the arts themselves flourish.

A work has just been published here purporting to be the *Political Testament* of the celebrated English minister Sir Robert Walpole, afterwards created Earl of Orford. It is in two vols. 12mo. The notary who has drawn up this pretended will is neither an Englishman nor a politician; he is the same person who gave us, some time ago, the *History of the Administration of Sir Robert Walpole*, but what is very extraordinary in an historian, he has not yet learnt to spell the name of his hero, for he always writes it *Walpoole*. We are assured that this *Political Testament* is the fabrication of a certain M. Dupont, though others ascribe it to the Chevalier Goudard, author of two other works, *The Interests of France ill understood*, and, *A Political Dissertation upon Portugal*. It is very certain that the author is one who knows nothing either

of England or of the first elements of politics. This pretended *Testament* is preceded by a collection of *Letters from Sir Robert Walpole to different Persons.* I should not have much difficulty in believing these letters originals, were they less short; but letters on business are not struck off like the notes that fly about from house to house among the fashionable world; they must, from their very nature, be of some length, and that mark of authenticity is wanting to these. If they really are originals, therefore, I think they must be mutilated. Some curious particulars are given in them relative to the troubles which agitated Europe in 1728 and 1730. The object of the Testament is to trace the internal situation of Great Britain, and its connections with its neighbours. We see in the first part that the writer has no clear ideas upon his subject; he says, by turns, that England has too much and too little liberty, too much and too little commerce, too much and too little public credit. Little is wanting to his having made of Sir Robert Walpole a missionary of the Catholic religion. In every page we see a man who has not reflected well upon the subject of which he treats, and who knows nothing of the country about which he writes. The second part of the work is vague, unconnected, destitute of arrangement, and often very obscure, full of feeble perceptions and half-views, though displaying some knowledge. The style is, in general, incor-

rect, too figurative, and often extremely involved. Good night to Mr. Notary who has drawn up this will; he shall never draw up mine.

I alluded, on a former occasion, to a romance, in the old Gothic style, written by Mr. Horace Walpole, son to the celebrated English minister, and author of the letter from the King of Prussia to Rousseau, which was made by the latter the foundation of his quarrel with Mr. Hume. Mr. Walpole is the author of many other things besides the romance in question; his works must not be judged as those of a man of letters by profession, but as amusements of the leisure hours of a man of quality. A translation of his Gothic romance, which is entitled, *The Castle of Otranto*, has just been published. It is a series of supernatural appearances, put together under the most interesting form imaginable. Let one be ever so much of a philosopher, that enormous helmet, that monstrous sword, the portrait which starts from its frame and walks away, the skeleton of the hermit praying in the oratory, the vaults, the subterranean passages, the moonshine,—all these things make the hair of the sage stand on end, as much as that of the child and his nurse; so much are the sources of the marvellous the same to all men. It is true that nothing very important results at last from all these wonders, but the aim of the author was to amuse, and he certainly cannot be

reproached with having missed his aim. The conclusion might have been better wound up; all the mysterious incidents which had occurred in the course of the history, ought to have been fully explained, and the author has not thought proper to give himself so much trouble. The indefatigable M. Eidous is the person who has translated this romance, and it is done with his usual *correctness* and *elegance*.

Mr. Walpole, in his preface, has arraigned M. de Voltaire very severely, for what the latter wrote some years ago derogatory to Shakespeare. I hate these kind of national disputes; they often lead, even among men of wit and talents, to saying very rude and brutal things; nay, it happens but too often, that these things are said from mere party spirit, and are not the real sentiments of the author; they are no less insincere than unjust. A sound critic will certainly not hastily and lightly decide the great question, whether a mixture of tragic and comic in the same piece is, or is not, contrary to good taste. It is certain that if princes and persons of exalted rank, in treating of serious affairs, of interesting and melancholy events, speak in a language elevated, noble, and pathetic, the tone of the inferior personages is very different: those who attend in the antichambers of princes do not speak in the same style with those who are admitted into their closets. It is also to be remarked, that the French tragedy

is the only species of drama existing where that uniformity of tone is observed, which gives an uniformity of colouring always monotonous, and often fatiguing. But this matter would lead to too long a discussion were it now to be entered upon; it may hereafter form the subject of a very interesting chapter.

January, 1768.

The author of the drama entitled *The Honest Criminal*, M. Fenouillot de Falbaire, has finished where he ought to have begun. He conceived the idea of his piece from two lines which M. Marmontel has written on the subject in his *French Poetics*. After the piece was finished and printed, M. de Falbaire began to make enquiries into the truth of the story, and into the principal circumstances of it;—he took considerable pains to learn all the details, when he was no longer in a situation to profit by the knowledge he acquired. The interest of the public in this drama has increased in proportion as the truth of the facts has been established, and the author has benefited very much by the compassion which no heart of sensibility could refuse to the hero of his piece. The letter that follows contains the true statement of this deplorable adventure. It is dated from Nismes, the scene where the tragedy was acted, and has made a great sensation at Paris.

"December 9th, 1767.

"*The Honest Criminal* is not yet in circulation here, my dear sir, I have merely heard of a copy which was brought hither by M. Alison; but as he remained only one day at Nismes, I could not procure a sight of it. The author would deserve, most undoubtedly, all the success he has obtained, even though his work had no other merit than that of the subject chosen. Such a choice displays a heart full of sensibility and humanity, an open, active, and candid mind, which cannot be checked by prejudices, or by difference of opinions.—These qualities are far preferable to mere wit and talents, though they seldom fail to be their companions where the latter flourish in an eminent degree.

"The hero of this drama, the sieur Fabre, respecting whom you have honoured me with your enquiries, is no longer here. His disasters, by ruining his little fortune and occasioning the death of his father, reduced him to the necessity of quiting his native place, and seeking a new establishment in a small town in the Cevennes where he can live at less expence. He gains his livelihood by the manufacture of silk stockings, and has married a relation to whom he was engaged before his captivity, and who had the constancy to wait for him till the time of his emancipation was arrived. He is entirely free from ambition, and I do not think that he would easily be induced to under-

take a journey to Paris. I have mentioned the subject to his mother, who shed abundance of tears at the recital I made her of M. de Falbaire's sentiments towards her son, uttering at the same time the warmest expressions of gratitude for them.—Her only desire was to obtain a complete pardon for her son, such as had been obtained by the Sieur Turge his companion in misfortune. Turge has been reinstated in his rights, and his property has been restored to him, instead of which young Fabre only enjoys his liberty in virtue of a brevet from the Duke de Choiseul, so that he is still deprived of the rights of a citizen, and can bring no civil action. It would be an act well worthy of the Duchess de Villeroi's generosity, to procure the full re-establishment of this unfortunate young man, and I feel perfectly assured that M. de Falbaire will have the truest satisfaction in restoring a person of such high deserts to his country.

"The particulars of the Sieur Fabre's misfortunes, about which you, sir, so earnestly enquire, are as follows.—The protestants, who swarm in this province, have experienced frequent vicissitutes of alternate tolerance and persecution, on account of the assemblies which they hold in the deserts. During a time of calm, a small detachment of the troops in garrison, with a serjeant at their head, were sent every Sunday to the place where the protestants of the town of Nismes usually assembled. These troops used to retun

mingled with the persons who had formed the assembly, appearing to endeavour by their conversation to encourage those whom their presence had intimidated, and to inspire general confidence. This manœuvre continued for a month, when all on a sudden the serjeant who commanded the detachment had orders to arrest some of the leading men that attended at the meeting. It fell to the lot of the Sieur Turge and Fabre the father, to be arrested. The son of the latter had taken to flight, exhorting his father to follow him, but when the young man found that from his age, his terror, and the difficulties of the route he had been unable to follow him, and had fallen into the hands of the soldiers, he turned back and rushing into the midst of these soldiers conjured them to take him instead of his father. The latter opposed this generous action, saying that his son who was young and full of vigour should not be sacrificed to save the feeble remains of life to an old man, who must in any case be near his end. This affecting contest between paternal tenderness and filial piety, which was enough to draw tears from the most obdurate heart, was not without its effect upon the soldiers. Their souls were touched, but their superiors required a victim; duty in a military capacity is a sentiment which must supersede compassion. The intreaties of the son decided their choice; the father was released, and the young man was led away, the wretched parent being

left in despair, that he had not strength to follow his son when his courage and affection would have urged him to it.

" A short time after this event, the Marshal de Mirepoix came to take the command in the province. Some busy people, who wanted to make themselves of importance with him, persuaded him, that he might easily compel their protestant minister, Paul Rabeau, to quit the kingdom, by threatening the protestants of Nismes, to punish their fellow-citizens with the utmost rigour of the law, if they would not send their minister into banishment; and, on the contrary, promising full and immediate liberty to those who were arrested, if the minister would depart quietly. The latter, however, thinking himself in duty bound to prefer the interests of the greater part of his flock, to that of two individuals alone, persisted in his resolution not to leave the country, and the unfortunate young men were condemned to the galleys. Fabre remained there nearly seven years, when, at length, he got a memorial addressed to the Duke de Choiseul, stating all the circumstances of his misfortune, on which this equitable and compassionate minister immediately ordered that he should be set at liberty.

" This, Sir, is the true history of the *Honest Criminal*, such as it passed under our eyes; and the truth of which, every person in the town is capable of attesting. If M. de Falbaire wishes

for any farther information on the subject, and is desirous of obtaining it from the young man himself, he may address his enquiries to M. Fabre, junior, merchant, at Ganges, in the Cevennes. I am very impatient to be acquainted with a piece, the author of which has given me a high opinion of his talents from the generous sentiments he has evinced. I shall be much flattered if I learn from you that I can be useful to him in any way, or procure any farther satisfaction to his laudable curiosity. I have the honour to be with all the sentiments due to you,

" VINCENT."

In consequence of this letter, M. Fenouillot de Falbaire addressed one directly to M. Fabre, to which the latter returned the following answer.

" Ganges, 14th December, 1797.

" SIR,

" I received, with great surprise, the honour of your two letters, and the drama that accompanied them, which you did me the favour of sending, under the countersign of Monseigneur the Duke de Choiseul. I read the *Honest Criminal* immediately, which drew showers of tears from my eyes, in recalling so forcibly to my remembrance, a father, whose tenderness for me exceeded the power of expression. As to the generous action which you are pleased to extol so highly, I never considered it but as what every son in my place would have done. Since, how-

ever, you desire to have a memorial drawn up, stating all the circumstances, and attested by persons to whom the affair is well known, I will have the honour of sending you one. I never claimed any merit to myself in this affair; I therefore hope, Sir, you will spare me, and not lavish encomiums on one who cannot consider himself as deserving of them. I have quitted my native town, and have fixed myself, where I trusted I should have lived unknown to the world, and passed my days in tranquillity, with a wife whom I tenderly love, though enjoying a very moderate fortune.

"More sensible than I have power to express of the kindness towards me shewn by the Duchess de Villeroi, do me the favour to make my most humble respects and acknowledgements to her: I am much mortified, that it is not now in my power to enter more at large upon my present state; but my wife's father is with me, and is, we are afraid, near his end, so that I must attend to the duties required of me on so solemn an occasion. As soon as I am released from these duties, whether happily or unhappily, I shall make it a law to myself to comply with the Duchess's request and yours, in occupying myself with the memorial which you do me the honour of desiring. It will not be without pain, that I shall recur to circumstances which I wish much to forget; but I have learnt to yield to the decrees of Providence,

convinced that they are always directed to the good of those whom he is graciously pleased to protect. Nothing more remains at present, than to assure you that I am, with all possible gratitude, Sir, your very obedient humble servant.

"FABRE."

These two letters have exceedingly increased the public interest and compassion for an unfortunate young man, whose filial piety, carried even to heroism, has been recompensed by seven years of the galleys; and who, as a compensation for all his sufferings and his entire ruin, has not yet been able to obtain the favour of being re-established in his station as a citizen. Scarcely delivered from his chains, he has resumed his industry with increased activity, and contributes with all his powers towards the prosperity of an ungrateful country, which has only endeavoured to oppress and destroy him. O virtue! if these be thy trials and rewards, how little are men worthy, that thou shouldst take up thy abode among them.

It is said, that the author of the *Honest Criminal* intends, in the first place, to change the title of his work, which is, in fact, a very ridiculous one, and to call it *Filial Tenderness*; that he means to shorten it according to the advice of M. Marmontel, omitting between four and five hundred lines, and thus chastened, it is to be played next month, upon the private theatre of

the Duchess de Villeroi. It is also said, that a proposal will be made for the persons who are present at this representation, to tax themselves voluntarily, to what amount they please, the money to be for the use of young Fabre. I cannot, however, forbear hoping that no such subscription will take place. I own that I should be vexed to see the same thing done this year for Fabre, that was done last year for Molé. It is not that I, by any means, consider the profession of an actor as unworthy of a citizen, but I would not have M. Fabre's case confounded with that of an actor, nor would I have him assisted in the same manner. M. Fabre is a man whom his virtues and his misfortunes have rendered sacred; let his virtues and his misfortunes then be properly respected. Not one of us has ever been in the terrible defile where a detestable law and unfortunate circumstances placed him, nor, unless we are so tried, can any one of us say, that we should prove such a hero as he did.

If this piece should succeed on Madame de Villeroi's private theatre, it is thought very possible, that permission may be obtained for its being performed on the French theatre. In this opinion I do not concur; I have no doubt of its producing a great effect on the former, since the subject, and the very general, though secret, interest that the story has excited, will prepossess every one in its favour. But be this as it may,

the piece will never be performed in public; we are not yet arrived at that point.

Monseigneur the Duke de Randan, Governor of Franche Comté, who has just taken the title of Duke de Lorges, having been named Marshal of France in the beginning of this year, the province had proposed giving a festival upon the occasion. His Grace, however, requested that, considering the rigour of the season, the money destined for this purpose might rather be distributed among the poor. Such an instance of benevolence might very reasonably have been expected to make a considerable noise at Paris, but it could not stand its ground against a history which got into circulation about the same time, and was the great topic of conversation for several days. It was said, that Mademoiselle Guimard, the celebrated Opera-dancer, had immortalized herself by an act of the most uncommon generosity. The Prince de Soubise being in the habit of giving her every year some jewel or trinket as a New-Year's gift, she begged that he would this year rather make his present in money, intimating, that she was in want of a supply. The Prince, in consequence, sent her six thousand livres. This was during the extreme cold of the month of January. Mademoiselle Guimard, as the story says, set off immediately, with the money in her pocket, alone, not having even a servant to

attend her, and thus she went into all the poorest houses in her neighbourhood, enquiring particularly into the situation of each family, and distributing her alms in proportion to the degree of distress she found; in this manner did she give away, within a few days, not only the Prince's donation, but two thousand livres of her own in addition. These facts, it was said, were well established by the police, for virtue loves to conceal its own good deeds, nor would so honourable and affecting an instance of kindness and generosity otherwise have ever been known.

In hearing of this noble action you are, no doubt, seized with the highest admiration, and ready to exclaim with transport and intoxication, that the bounds and capers of Mademoiselle Guimard are ennobled for ever in your eyes.—'Tis my lot, alas! to play the part, or something like it, of the good pastor, who having preached to his flock on the subject of the crucifixion, and made them all shed torrents of tears at the affecting picture he drew of the sufferings of our Redeemer, thought it not right to send them away in such deep affliction, so to console them, concluded with saying, "Do not, however, weep so "much, my children, it is very possible that it "may not be all true."

I die with apprehension, that Mademoiselle Guimard's noble action, may in like manner be found not to be *all true*. The only thing which

I have been able to make out as a well authenticated fact is, that her servant not being one day at the Opera-house in waiting for her, when the opera was over, she was beginning to scold, when he excused himself by saying, that he had been with his mother who was very ill, and suffering extremely from the severity of the weather. The tender and compassionate Guimard on this ordered the man to lead her to his mother's habitation, and seeing the state of misery she was in, assisted her with the utmost care and kindness during the continuance of her illness. This was all right enough, but we may very well dispense with ourselves from any excess of admiration; it is perhaps no such extraordinary thing for an opera-dancer to be in a situation that will enable her to give away eight thousand livres in charity. One thing is very certain, that I have always tenderly loved Mademoiselle Guimard, and that she must be very amiable, for she has abundance of friends, although they say, that from her extreme slenderness, she resembles a spider. It is said, that the tone of her voice is very harsh and rough, and that offends my ears dreadfully; but as I have never heard her speak, the report has not diminished my affection for her. She within these few days past performed a character in a private play at the Duchess de Villeroi's, and excepting the disadvantage of her voice, came off with great écalt. M. Marmontel,

touched with the story of the eight thousand livres distributed in charity, has addressed a long epistle in verse to his heroine upon the subject.

April, 1768.

A revolution has taken place at the château of Ferney, which occupies the public extremely, and has been the great topic of conversation for a fortnight past; this, I believe to be the utmost extent to which Parisian attention can be carried. M. de La Harpe, who had been received by M. de Voltaire about two years ago, with wife, bag, and baggage, came to Paris, in the beginning of the winter, on a visit, and returned in February to Ferney, where his wife had remained during his absence. Scarcely was he returned, when a rumour began to be circulated, that there had been a quarrel between him and his benefactor, and that, a few days after, he, with his wife, bag, and baggage, set off for Paris. I do not know this young man, not even his face: he is said to have talents, but to be very much of a coxcomb; something of this kind I should think there must be, since he has a great many enemies, and his talents and reputation are not yet sufficiently distinguished to have created them. They have taken advantage of this opportunity to insert in the Utrecht Gazette, a sort of biographical memoir of him, which does not place him in an advantageous point of view. He answered in the

Avant Coureur, with a tone of lightness not very becoming, when the question was to vindicate his reputation from some very serious calumnies. M. de Voltaire immediately stepped forward to his assistance, by inserting the following declaration in the public papers.

"Château at Ferney, March 31st, 1768.

"I have learnt in my retreat, that in the "Utrecht Gazette of the eleventh of March, "1768, some calumnies were inserted against "M. de La Harpe, a young man of very great "merit, already celebrated for his tragedy of "Warwick, and for many prizes obtained in the "French Academy, with the general approbation "of the public. It is, probably, his merit which "has drawn upon him the imputations sent from "Paris to the author of the Utrecht Gazette.

"Among them appears to be an accusation "of unhandsome behaviour towards me, during "the time he resided with me at Ferney. Truth "requires me to declare, that these rumours are "wholly devoid of foundation; and that the "whole article in the Gazette, against M. de La "Harpe, is a calumny from one end to the other. "It is melancholy to see how much malignant per-"sons seek to transform the public papers, as well as "other more serious publications, into defamatory "libels. Every citizen is interested to prevent "the consequences of an abuse so fatal to society.

"Signed, VOLTAIRE."

This declaration is so much the more kind and noble in the author of it, as, the fact is, that M. de La Harpe did not behave altogether as he ought to have done towards him. The history of the quarrel is as follows: M. de La Harpe, on arriving at Paris last autumn, put into circulation an epigram against M. Dorat, which he ascribed to M. de Voltaire. It was much admired, and was, indeed, so good, that it might justly enough have been supposed to come from Ferney; but the illustrious owner of Ferney always has asserted, and continues to assert, that it is not his. There is no good reason why he should deny it so strenuously, if he really be the author, since it could only be regarded as a just chastisement, which M. Dorat had drawn upon himself by his own imprudence. The other part of M. de La Harpe's offence is still more aggravating. M. de Voltaire asserts, that he stole several papers from him, and, among others, the second canto of a poem he is writing, entitled, *The War of Geneva*; this latter he put into circulation at Paris, not only without the knowledge of his patron, but totally agains his wishes, he having particular reasons for not communicating this canto to any one. It is certain, and that I can myself attest, that it came among us by means of M. de La Harpe: he even said to one of my friends, who repeated it to me, that M. de Voltaire had charged him with it expressly, in order to make it known to his friends

at Paris. On his return to Ferney, being reproached by his benefactor with the ill-turns he had played him, he told a number of falsehoods upon the subject, and had even the imprudence to name a person, from whom he said he received the canto while he was at Paris. This person, not having been advertised by him of what he had done, and being questioned on the subject by a friend of M. de Voltaire's, flatly denied ever having had the manuscript in his possession. The denial was so much the more fatal to M. de La Harpe, since he never pretended to have had it from any other person; since, therefore, this person denied having given it to him, an inference not very favourable to M. de La Harpe must be drawn. To aggravate his offence still farther, when thus detected, instead of evincing sorrow and repentance, for conduct so every way disgraceful and dishonourable, he assumed a haughty, arrogant, tone, and wrote from his chamber at Ferney several very impertinent notes to the master of the château, to whom he owed the highest respect and regard, for kindnesses shewn him in various ways. This insolence occasioned M. de Voltaire to lose all patience, and he immediately sent away his guest with his wife and little property. Such is the true history of this breach; every other that may be put into circulation is false and distorted.

The most disagreeable circumstance attending it is, that it has given occasion to another breach,

much more distressing to the lord of Ferney. The departure of Madame Denis, M. de Voltaire's niece, and of M. and Madame Dupuy, followed close upon that of M. de La Harpe, so that the patriarch was left with no other person except the ex-jesuit, Father Adam; one who has taken up his residence at Ferney ever since the dissolution of his society, but who is not considered as a genius of the first rate order. His principal employment is to play at chess with his benefactor, and always to let him win. As he loves nothing so much as being perfectly at his ease, as eating and sleeping well, without any trouble on his part, he thinks these accommodations cheaply obtained by losing a few games at chess, and submitting quietly to the jokes, occasionally somewhat keen, passed upon him. This may, perhaps, be thought rather a servile character to perform, but Father Adam seems to prefer it much either to starving or to labouring for his bread. The friends of M. de Voltaire are, however, not at all pleased at the idea of his being left with no other person in the house but this man. That fools often gain a great ascendancy over men of understanding and talents is a fact well established in history; and if our reverend father should govern with pretty absolute sway at Ferney, it would not be the first instance ever known of a great mind being governed by a very inferior one.

Madame Denis arrived at Paris with M. and

Madame Dupuy, about the middle of last March. Madame Dupuy is that descendant of the great Corneille, whom M. de Voltaire took under his protection, and settled an easy fortune upon her; her husband is a gentleman of the country of Gex, but he is not esteemed a first rate genius any more than Father Adam. He came this winter to Paris in the hope of obtaining a captain's commission, which, supported as his application was, by M. de Voltaire's recommendation, was immediately granted him. He was but just returned to Ferney when this quarrel broke out.

A revolution, so unexpected, has given occasion to all possible kinds of rumours and discussions at Paris, and imparted a sort of currency to every supposition that could be assigned as the cause of it. Madame Denis has said that she is sent by her uncle on business to Paris; that she is to remain there at least three months; and that her uncle intends taking a journey to Stutgard during her absence, in order, if possible, to recover all the money due to him. It is known, however, that M. de Voltaire has not taken this journey, and what the business is with which Madame Denis pretends to be charged has never appeared. It has since been rumoured, that Madame Denis had administered the patriarch's household affairs so ill, that he is now obliged to œconomize very much for some time, or he would not be able to set himself free again in

the world. This supposition appears plausible enough; for although the lord patriarch enjoys an annual revenue of more than a hundred thousand livres, it is certain, that want of order and management will soon run through ten times that fortune; and disorder, by all accounts, was carried by Madame Denis to as high a point of perfection as could well be imagined. Others say, that M. de Voltaire could no longer resist the earnest desire he has always had to go and pay his court to the Empress of Russia, and to be himself an eye-witness of the glories of her reign. If this was an object worthy of him, his great age seemed to oppose the undertaking such a journey; and, indeed, supposing such to have been his intention, there was the more reason for Madame Denis to have remained at Ferney. Light and malevolent minds, who love catastrophes, and can easily create them when none to their taste actually occur, have circulated reports which are very alarming to the friends of M. de Voltaire, as giving serious apprehensions for his safety. These reports affirm, that the great number of pamphlets published against religion, in the course of the winter, had at length alarmed the clergy and the parliaments; that the Archbishop of Paris, for example, had complained to the Queen of the Archbishop of Canterbury's letter; and that her Majesty, after having received the last sacraments of the church, demanded of

the King, that the author should be punished; that one of the ministers, a friend to M. de Voltaire, had only time to send to him in haste, desiring that he would escape the moment the letter was received; and that the parliament of Burgundy had issued a decree of arrest against him. All these rumours proved but a tissue of falsehoods. One report alone, out of the many circulated, is strictly true; that M. —— said this winter to the Abbé Chauvelin, that it was no longer possible to overlook all that was done by M. de Voltaire against religion, and that if *The Dinner of the Count de Boulainvilliers* should fall into his hands, he should denounce it to the parliament, and recommend the issuing a decree of arrest against the author. This menace has, however, not given any very serious alarm to the patriarch's friends. Besides that, the accused does not live within the jurisdiction of the parliament of Paris, it would be difficult to institute a suit without being able to bring any legal charges against him; a pamphlet, printed in a foreign country, and not sold at Paris, could not come under that description.

What is truly to be lamented is, that Madame Denis's quitting Ferney, at this moment, has given a sort of currency to these reports; and it has been a matter of discussion at Paris within these few days, carried on with no inconsiderable degree of warmth, whether it would be best

to banish M. de Voltaire the kingdom, or to shut him up for life. Questions of gratuitous barbarity started by the profoundly idle, but which are never agitated without some danger to him who is the object of them. For the rest, the public is still ignorant of the real causes of this revolution; and the first step necessary, in order to ascertain them, would be to assure ourselves that the parties concerned in it tell the exact truth, and nothing but the truth. M. de Voltaire pretends that he was tired of being innkeeper to all Europe, that the good mamma Denis ruined him in plays, in balls, in festivities, in suppers of two hundred dishes. When he speaks more seriously, he gives us to understand, that the rupture with Madame Denis was occasioned by the dismissal of M. de La Harpe; and if the scandalous chronicles of Geneva are to be credited, the lady, though sixty years of age, was desperately smitten with the little man. What an idea!—Supposing that Madame Denis was, as I have heard confidently affirmed, very gallant in her youth, we surely must believe that there is an age when these youthful errors are renounced, and when a woman must be sensible to the difference between an uncle who may well be called the first man in the nation, as to his talents; and a young madcap, who will never in his life write any thing that may rival *La Henriade*, or *La Pucelle*. Nevertheless, I must always feel that I should

have great difficulty to pardon Madame Denis for leaving her uncle to the mercy of an Ex-Jesuit; I am even inclined to think that although M. de Voltaire drove her out at one door, she ought to have re-entered at the other, rather than consent that the existence of a man, so precious to all Europe, should be abandoned to the cares of his servants and a Father Adam.

It is no longer doubtful that Madame Denis is come to fix her residence at Paris, with her clumsy pupil, Madame Dupuy, for they have just hired a house together. It is equally certain, that M. de Voltaire talks of selling the land belonging to Ferney, and has absolutely been in treaty with several different persons of Geneva for that purpose. It remains to be known whether he will continue to live in the vile house at Ferney close by the estate, which he had taken for his life, or whether he means entirely to quit a country with which, for fifteen years, he has seemed so much pleased. It is well known, that he writes often to his niece, and has settled twenty thousand livres a year upon her, payable at Paris; besides which, at parting, he made her a present of sixty thousand livres. Such a provision, united with her own fortune, which has certainly not been diminished during her residence with her uncle, will enable her to live very handsomely at Paris.

This same niece, whose name even would scarcely have been known, but for her abode at Fer-

ney, is the widow of a Commissary at War. Her youth was passed at Lille, where her husband exercised his function; she used to thrum a little upon the harpsichord, and passed for a good player, at the time when the compositions of Couperin and Rameau were considered as chef-d'œuvres of musical science. Heaven was pleased to create her devoid of understanding, and to endow her with a soul of the most ordinary stamp; she is, what is called in the world, *a good kind of woman*, which means, in real truth, one who, if she has nothing bad in her, has at least not a single quality that is not of the most homely cast. Nature intended her to vegetate tranquilly through life, playing at cards with the gossips of her neighbourhood, and prattling with them over all the little trumpery occurrences of the day. But chance made her niece to the first man in the kingdom; by which means, she learned to talk about the belles-lettres as a parrot learns to prate, or a bulfinch to whistle. During the time M. de Voltaire was at Berlin, she wrote a comedy, which the players, out of regard for that illustrious man, never would perform. When *The Coquet corrected*, of the late Lanoue appeared, she insisted that the finest situations and the best verses in it were stolen from her piece. She afterwards wrote, during her residence at Ferney, a tragedy, which no entreaties on her part could ever prevail on her uncle to read.

The extraordinary sensation which these embroilments have excited at Paris, has led me into such minute details; but they will, I doubt not, be found interesting to you since they concern the most celebrated man in Europe. Among so many different and confused reports, what I have related is all that we know for certain at present.

M. Gaignat, receiver-general of the Consignations of Requests, is just dead at the age of seventy one. Master of a large fortune, and having early in life lost a wife, and a daughter of twelve years old, both of whom he loved passionately, his friends with a view to amusing his mind and alienating it from so melancholy a subject, endeavoured to lead him into a taste for collecting books and pictures. He in consequence has formed an admirable collection of both. His pictures are supposed to be worth three hundred thousand crowns, and his books worth two hundred and fifty thousand livres. M. Gaignat was neither a man of taste or abilities but as he purchased merely for his amusement, experience supplied to him what he wanted naturally, and his collections have this advantage over all others known in Paris, that every thing is of the first degree of excellence, that there is nothing middling among them. He has ordered by his will that both his books and pictures shall be sold in detail, since he wishes, he says, to procure ama-

teurs the same pleasure that he has had himself in forming their own collections, according to their own tastes, and not leave them to amass, at one stroke, a collection ready formed. This sale will not take place till Lent next year. His property is left principally to some distant relations in the Nivernais, but he has bequeathed handsome legacies to his servants, and to some of his friends.

The Chevalier de Lorenzi is just returned to Paris, after a visit of eighteen months to his own country, Italy. His return has led me to make some very serious reflections. I have thought how culpable those people who hear his sayings are towards the public, and towards posterity, in keeping them to themselves instead of communicating them to those who are not in a situation to hear them at the fountain head; I have, therefore, felt that a repertory of this nature would be a very proper place in which to preserve the most choice of the Chevalier's sallies, and have come to the determination to record, as opportunities shall be presented, such as come under my knowledge. I shall not observe any chronological order in the arrangement, since, whether ancient or modern, they are equally precious. On a former occasion, I have mentioned who and what the Chevalier is. Though an Italian by birth, he has lived chiefly at Paris, mixing with

the very best society. It was discovered by chance about ten years ago, that he was very poor; till that time nobody had any idea of it, and as to him himself he will never know it during the whole course of his life. His taste has always led him to the study of the abstract sciences, particularly geometry and astronomy, and he has insensibly acquired a habit of appreciating all the events of life according to geometrical calculations. He is naturally thoughtful, and absent, but of the most perfect simplicity of character; always frank, sincere, and grave. What renders his sayings so amusing is, that the operations of his head are carried on very slowly, and he can with difficulty suit his expression to his ideas; suppressing, therefore, all that passes intermediately between two propositions, he often answers to what is passing in his own mind, instead of answering to what is said to him. As nothing ever strikes him any farther than as its truth or falsehood are concerned, he can never view it on the ludicrous side; he can, therefore, bear a joke better than any body; we may laugh at him, and at what he says, as much as we please, he is never angry; but never is it possible to take him out of his serious humour, and make him laugh with us.

On his return to Paris, I found him one day at the house of Madame Geoffrin, when he was

perplexing himself extremely with the genealogies of two women with whom he is intimately acquainted, and who bear the same name, though they are very distantly related. Madame Geoffrin endeavoured in vain to assist him in untwisting his genealogical thread, when at length she said to him, "Chevalier, you are absolutely "doting, you get worse and worse at every "moment."—"Ah, Madam," he replied, "life "is so short."

The next day he accompanied M. de Saint Lambert to Versailles. In the way, this latter, in consequence of something that passed, was led to ask him his age. "I am sixty years of age," answered the Chevalier.—"I did not sup- "pose you so old," said M. de Saint Lambert.— "When I say," said the Chevalier, "sixty, I "do not mean that I am that complete, I shall "be so presently, but"——"But what age are "you really?"—"Fifty-five, but you would not "surely have me take the trouble of changing "my age every year as I change my shirts."

One day when he purposed to extol the figure of a woman, he said that she was as fine a figure as Mademoiselle Allard. "You are un- "fortunate," said I, "in your comparison; Made- "moiselle Allard, indeed, merits eulogium under "many points of view; but nobody ever yet cited "her as a fine figure." "Ah," said he, "well,

"I don't know her, I never even saw her; but as "every body else talks of Mademoisselle Allard, "I did not see why I should not also talk of "her."

One day, at the house of Madame Geoffrin, M. d'Alembert and myself were engaged in conversation, when the Chevalier was standing by us, leaning against the chimney sleeping, so that he could with difficulty keep his head erect. "It "should seem, Chevalier," said I, "that you are "very much entertained with our conversation, "since you sleep standing." "Oh," said he, perking up his head, and in his tone of simplicity and naïveté, "I can sleep whenever I please."

These anecdotes will suffice for a beginning of my *Lorenziana;* it shall be continued as occasions present themselves of collecting the curious strokes that escape from the mouth of this singular character.

Young Fabre, the man who furnished M. Fenouillot de Falbaire with the subject of his drama, *The Honest Criminal*, has, at length, obtained his full pardon. He was only released from the galleys on a private order from the Duke de Choiseul, consequently was, as to civil purposes, dead; but he is now restored to his situation as a citizen. His pardon passed the king's Council of State, on the twenty-fourth of this month. M. de Falbaire may congratulate himself upon having

been the immediate instrument in procuring this tardy piece of justice.

On the seventh of this month, was performed for the first time, at the French theatre, *Beverley: a domestic Tragedy taken from the English*, by M. Saurin, of the French Academy. In the first place, I do not like this title. If *Beverley* be a tragedy, why call it a *domestic* one. Are his misfortunes such as can happen only in private life; or is it, that what is tragic to a simple citizen becomes comic when princes are in question. It should have been called simply a tragedy; and the paltry epithet of *domestic* should have been left to the domestic critics, who have already invented the term, *Weeping Comedy*, and who have written a great deal of nonsense both upon the one term and the other. In the second place, why is this tragedy called *Beverley*. It is from the name of the hero. But this name is that of a private individual; it is not an historical name. If M. Saurin had been guilty of the same wrongs, and experienced the same tragic consequences from them as Beverley did, then I suppose we should have seen posted up, *Saurin: a domestic Tragedy*. This piece ought to be called, as in the English, *The Gamester: a Tragedy*, and nothing else but *The Gamester*.

It is not a piece which on its first performance in London met with great success; it has,

indeed, so little reputation in its own country, that among several English whom I have questioned on the subject, not one could tell me the name of the author. About ten years ago, it fell into the hands of M. Diderot. Struck with some passages in it, he set himself to make a sort of translation for the benefit of some ladies with whom he was staying in the country. Almost at the same time another translation of the same piece was printed, perhaps more faithful, since M. Diderot never scruples making any additions which he thinks would embellish what he takes in hand. But this second translation being very dull and spiritless, the play of Beverley did not meet with more applause than the play of the Gamester had received in England. M. Saurin then got possession of M. Diderot's manuscript; and, being assured by the latter, that he had no intention of making use of it, he set to work upon it, with a view of finishing it for representation.

In doing so he has preserved the plot of the English play entire, as to all the leading features. He has omitted the characters of the two sharpers, Bates and Dawson, and has endeavoured to render that of Stukely more supportable, by giving him a stronger motive for his animosity against Beverley. He supposes him to have been formerly in love with Mrs. Beverley, but rejected by her; and seeking, by the ruin of the rival, who was preferred

to him, to revenge his slighted passion.* M. Saurin has farther endeavoured to render the gamester's situation still more horrible, by giving him a son. This child, who is between seven and eight years old, is left by his mother in the prison with his father, while she goes to find the means of procuring his release. Tommy, as he is called, is sleeping quietly in an arm chair, while his wretched father, a prey to the most cruel torments, determines to end his own life by poison. This forms a fine and truly pathetic contrast between the innocence of childhood and the agonies of a guilty mind. After Beverley has taken the poison, he casts his eyes upon his son, who, amidst his previous agitations, had scarcely been noticed. He reflects upon the situation in which this child would be left, exposed to the utmost misery and distress, and led, perhaps, by them into the paths of guilt and vice. From the dark despair in which he is plunged, he persuades himself that the greatest kindness he can shew his son is to place him for ever above the vicissitudes of fate, in

* M. de Grimm seems to have some mistaken ideas with regard to the English tragedy of the Gamester. The idea of Stukeley's having been in love with Mrs. Beverly, originates with the English author, it is not M. Saurin's idea. Neither is the incident of Beverley's having a son imagined by the French author; all he has done, more than the English one, is to bring the child upon the stage: that Beverley has a son appears several times in the course of the English play.—*Translator.*

making him pass from the sweet sleep in which he is then plunged into the sleep of death. Possessed with this idea, he draws out a knife, intending to stab him, but has not courage to effect his horrid purpose. The knife drops from his hand, and the child wakes, terrified with the noise. The mother returns, and brings the happy tidings of an unforeseen revolution in their affairs, by which they may all be happy; but the poison begins to operate, the paleness of death spreads itself over the features of the guilty Beverley, and he expires amid the most dreadful self-inflicted tortures, both of mind and body.

The great defects of this piece, as represented upon our stage, are, the feebleness of the plot, and the general want of truth and nature; it is utterly out of the bounds of probability, that things could have passed in Beverley's house as they are represented. The first three acts consist in perpetual comings and goings hither and thither, without any purpose whatever being answered by them; the people come with no particular view, and go away in the same manner, marching off always at the very moment when they are most in want of each other. The wretched Beverley has a wife, by whom he is adored, and a sister, who loves him tenderly; in Lewson he has a discreet and steady friend, who penetrates the infamous projects of Stukely; he himself desires ardently to be stopped on the brink of the precipice, which

he always sees open before him; he is never, for an instant, under any illusion with regard to his situation; he loves his wife and his sister; and if he has, for a moment, some suspicions of Lewson's integrity, two words would have destroyed them, without the possibility of their recurring. But no one steps forward to rescue him; he is abandoned, without pity, to his fatal passion, to his unhappy stars, and to the perfidy of Stukely. His wife is only introduced to make a great parade, with her false delicacy, with a false tranquillity, with a false disinterestedness, which are not in nature. Too great an importance is attached to the sacrifice she makes of her jewels; a sacrifice, which is made very foolishly, since the money is gone the next moment at the gaming table:—or, perhaps, I should speak more to the purpose if I were to say, that the poet has not shewn skill enough to avail himself of all the advantage which might have been derived from this incident. If M. Sedaine had taken it into his head to have had recourse to one of a similar kind, you would have seen what admirable use he could make of it. Beverley at least, in taking the jewels from his wife, ought to have been made to understand, that a part of them had been already employed in saving this unfortunate woman from want, and in paying masters for his son. But if the poet might be pardoned the affair of the diamonds, Mrs. Beverley is at least wholly inexcusable for leaving in her

husband's hands the hundred thousand crowns that arrive from Cadiz so opportunely. The old Jarvis, too, knows no better than to offer his little fortune to the Gamester. Indeed, M. Saurin, I knew this good old man, and it was to Mrs. Beverley and the child, not to her husband, that he offered his services; he even did better, he assisted them without their knowledge, though it was known to the whole audience; that was, however, nothing to him; but never would he have been so devoid of common sense as to offer his money to Beverley only to nourish and strengthen his fatal passion. You will tell me, that in pursuing my ideas, there would have been no small difficulty to bring Beverley into the state of despair which leads to his taking the poison. This was the very task for true genius to perform; it was that which the want of tragic or comic powers in the poet, which ever you please to call them, prevented his accomplishing. One of the great defects of the piece is, that the character of the Gamester is not amiable, consequently not interesting. He ought to have been endowed naturally with every possible good quality, the lustre of which, should have been tarnished by this one fatal passion. In the piece as it stands, he is nothing but a Gamester, always losing, yet playing and losing again; how can any one care about such a man's poisoning himself? The picture is throughout dark, dismal, gloomy; every

where we find the same colouring, consequently no effect can be produced.

M. Saurin has written his piece in irregular verse, which I think contributes not a little to weaken the effect. The piece is besides barren of sentiment and ideas, a great aridity reigns throughout. In fact a borrowed subject, one that has not taken its birth in the poet's head, will almost always savour of a want of that creative and nutritious sap which spreads life and vigour over every thing. If this were not so, copyists and imitators would be writers of the first class, confounded with, if not rising above, original authors. Those who have not reflected deeply upon this point, believe the barrenness and aridity of the piece in question to result naturally from the horror of the subject, and say, that such sort of exhibitions should be reserved for the Place de Grieve*. To this it may be answered, that the tragedy of Beverley is not more horrible than that of Mahomet, which is very true. The whole matter lies in the great distance between the talents of the two poets; hence it arises, that while the one chills and freezes his auditors, the other affects them tenderly,—dissolves their souls.

The idea of introducing the child is taken from the novel of *Cleveland*. As far as I can recollect, we are presented in this novel with a

* The place where criminals are executed at Paris.

father who, absorbed in a deep melancholy, is afraid to leave his children exposed to the caprices of fate. But if the situation in the novel be more natural, the picture in the tragedy is finer; the child sleeping tranquilly in the prison produces a very sublime effect. Had the author been endowed with more taste, he would not have had the child noticed either by his mother or the good old Jarvis; the less attention that was paid to him by the actors, the more he would have been rendered interesting to the spectators. I know not whether it may be considered as very much in nature for the idea of murdering the child to come into the guilty father's mind after he had taken the poison; it would have been more natural during the paroxyms which preceded this fatal deed. At the moment when the sacrifice of our own life is completed, the moral man loses his powers, the physical man recovers his, and this sudden revolution breaks asunder all moral ties, insulates the being whose existence is at its close, and leaves him none but personal and selfish feelings. All his ideas, all the faculties of his soul, are absorbed in the act he has committed, all interest for every other object disappears, or at least is exceedingly weakened. I can easily conceive a father in despair, murdering all his children and then himself;—but he would never sacrifice the children, if the first stroke were aimed at his

own bosom. I have also strong doubts whether suicide is ever interesting on the stage; it is, in fact, neither moral nor pathetic. How am I concerned in a man who is tired of life, or who is overwhelmed by despair making an end of himself, or what do I learn from it?—Nothing.—My curiosity satisfied, upon the circumstances of an event which is not very common, I am no farther affected by it, I think of it no more. If I am to be interested by a suicide, let me see Cato tearing out his entrails, because I see the fate of Rome hanging on his fate. But what does it signify to me that Beverley poisons himself? I only see one good for nothing being less in the world, and I think no more of him.

It is impossible not to be struck with seeing how much our poets combine together all possible means of terror, yet produce, at last, very little effect; there cannot be a more certain test of the futility of our dramatic exhibitions. It is for children to be terrified with the dagger and the poisoned cup; and the more the poet is poor in genius, the more does he trust to these means, the more does he seek to multiply them. True genius has other resources; and in a nation where real energy of character prevails, men would disdain such kind of aids, as are proper only to make children shudder. Before such an audience, the tragedy of *The Gamester* would be a simple and true picture of the inevitable miseries which a

passion for gaming brings in its train. These miseries are neither poison nor the dagger, but contempt and poverty, desertion and degradation. The loss of every honest and virtuous sentiment, would be the poison that would make the spectator tremble; this is the true catastrophe with which the gamester is threatened. It is not according to truth and nature that Beverley, amidst the rage of gaming, in which he is absorbed, should preserve a single spark of tenderness for his wife, his child, or his friends. But when shall we have dramas, which are no longer calculated to terrify children, but to touch, to affect, to interest men? We shall only have such, when the government shall regard public instruction as the first and most important duty of legislation; as the most soothing, and most certain means of strengthening and confirming its authority. Then will the fine arts be employed for their only proper destination, they will be rendered subservient to the progress of the national morals. The theatre will then become the school of a course of moral and political instruction; and poets will be not only men of genius, but statesmen. I own, that the most vigorous and the most enlightened governments of Europe are yet very far from being arrived at this point; and it is certain that, notwithstanding the vanity of our petty pretensions, modern nations are but assemblages of half-barbarians, children, and persons grown old and enervated by luxury: pub-

lic morals is, of all the sciences, that which is the least advanced among us.

M. Saurin's tragedy may be said to have succeeded, without being much applauded; nobody is satisfied with the impression it leaves upon the mind, yet people go in crowds to see it. No tears are excited, yet, on the first night of its being performed, a dreadful shriek of terror was heard from a box, when the gamester puts the poisoned cup to his lips; and, I am assured; that every evening, the moment when he lifts the knife to strike the child, has called forth a burst of feeling from the audience. On the first night, all these situations were too much drawn out; but this was a defect easily remedied, and the author has not been inattentive to it.

M. Diderot, in order to render the character of Stukely not only more endurable, but more dramatic, advised M. Saurin to make him a man naturally of a generous and elevated mind, but of dissipated and expensive habits, which had occasioned him to run through an ample fortune. He advised, besides, that he should be made the victim of an unconquerable passion for Mrs. Beverley; a passion, which he had omitted no means of subduing; he had even been for a time a voluntary exile from his country, in hopes of finding his cure in absence. After having made the tour of Europe, he should have taken up his abode, on his return, in a remote part of London, where he

might be removed from every chance of seeing the object, whose power he still feared. Concerns of business should, in spite of himself, have brought on again some intercourse between him and the Beverley's; and this should have proved the wreck of his honour and his virtuous resolutions. No longer master of himself, overcome by the passion which was consuming him, he should have taken advantage of the propensity to gaming which he observed in Beverley, and formed the project to make this the means of his ruin, in the hope that, getting possession of his fortune, he might also displace him in the affections of his wife. In consequence of this plan, he should never have quitted Mrs. Beverley during all the disasters of her husband, that is to say, through the whole course of the tragedy, and she might have considered him as the most sincere and most effective friend they had. At the end of the fourth act, when Beverley is carried to prison, and every thing is lost, Stukely should, for the first time, have ventured to talk of his passion to the object of it; his declaration should have been received with all the horror and indignation natural in a woman of virtue; and Stukely, seeing the whole edifice of iniquity, which he had been raising, fall at once to ruin, should, in despair, have thrown the port-folio, containing the ruined fortune of the husband, at the feet of the wife, and quitted her abruptly. This restitution

made, he might fall in a duel with Lewson, during the interval between the fourth and fifth acts; and Beverley, in the fifth act, after having taken poison in the prison, might learn too late the cause, and the conclusion, of his misfortunes. But in order to execute an intrigue, knit thus admirably together, the poet must himself have conceived it; and all the use made by M. Saurin of circumstances so well-imagined, was to give Stukely a feeble passion for Mrs. Beverley, which we never hear mentioned but in one soliloquy. Such a passion is an additional instance of poverty in M. Saurin's piece. We have in our history *The Day of the Dupes;* this tragedy might very well be called *The Play of the Dupes;* almost all the personages in it are dupes, not excepting Stukely, who is so stupidly wicked. But dupes are not dramatic characters, especially in tragedy.

A miserable wit has put into circulation a story, that an Englishman, terribly afflicted with the spleen, having been advised by his physicians to travel, came to Paris, where he arrived on the day that the *Gamester* was performed, for the first time. But having gone to the French theatre, in the hope of laughing, and instead of that, finding all the gloom and sadness of his own country, his malady was so much increased, that when he returned to his inn he hung himself in despair. This tale has excited much laughter; but I must observe to the would-be wit who framed it, that

there are no people in Europe who love tragedy so well as the French, but that does not prevent our being the gayest of European nations. I must observe farther, that Regnard, and the greater part of our comic poets, were men of melancholy and bilious constitutions, while M. de Voltaire, who is one of the gayest and liveliest of human beings, has never written any thing tolerable for the stage except tragedies; lively comedy is the only species of writing in which he never could succeed. It is, that he who laughs himself, and he who makes others laugh, are very different persons.

More Lorenziana.

The Chevalier de Lorenzi was one day talking, in a very slighting manner, of M. de Saint Lambert's knowledge of chess: "You forget," said the latter, "that I won fifteen louis of you "against thirty sous, during our campaign in "Minorca."—"'Tis true," answered the Chevalier, "but it was only towards the conlusion of the "siege."

During this siege, the Chevalier went every day to the trenches to make his observations, carrying with him his telescopes, and other astronomical instruments. One day he returned to his quarters, having left all his apparatus at the trenches. "They will be stolen from you, Che-"valier," said M. de Saint Lambert to him.—

"Oh no," he replied, "for I left my watch with "them."

It was the Chevalier de Lorenzi who occasioned the ruin of the late unfortunate Admiral Byng, since it was through him that the battle was lost. This is a fact little known; but the anecdote is curious. The Chevalier, groping about in the miserable hole where he was lodged, after the debarkation at Minorca, discovered, in an obscure corner, a book, which contained the signals of the English fleet. After having examined it, perceiving what it was, he carried it to the Prince de Beauveau, and the latter remitted it to Marshal Richelieu. At first, some trick was suspected, but when the sea-fight began, they soon perceived that the English obeyed these signals exactly; by this means, the French commanders were enabled to counteract all their manœuvres, so that they were at length compelled to retreat. The Chevalier de Lorenzi was too absent ever to recollect the service he had rendered, or to claim a reward for it; and the court never thought of volunteering the offer of a reward.

The Duke de Mirepoix, who loved the Chevalier very much, being named ambassador to England, proposed his accompanying him upon his embassy. The Chevalier gladly accepted the proposal; and it was agreed, that his clothes should be sent with the Duke's baggage. He was busied in packing up his trunks when he

received a message from the Duke, desiring that they might be finished and sent to him as soon as possible. He accordingly proceeded with great haste; and, lest any thing should be omitted that he might possibly want, he packed up all his clothes, nor did he perceive, till the trunks were gone, that he was in his shirt, and had left out nothing to put over it but a miserable old morning gown.

He has, for some time, lodged in the palace of the Luxembourg, where one of his friends procured him apartments. In descending the stairs one day, his foot slipped, and he fell, receiving a terrible blow on the nose. In going back to investigate the cause of his misfortune, he perceived a whitish sort of liquor dropped upon the stairs, when he thought it right to be exceedingly angry, and began to scold the porter for having suffered soapy water to be spilt in so dangerous a manner. The porter immediately assured him, that it was not soapy water; it was only a little orgeat, which had been spilt by the boy from the coffee-house. "Oh then," said the Chevalier, in a very mild and pacific tone, "I was certainly in "the wrong to be angry."

He is one of the richest of men in pocket handkerchiefs. As his apartments are high up in the palace, and he commonly forgets his handkerchief every day when he goes out, he finds it readier to buy one than to go up stairs again for

his own. A sempstress, who lives close by, has, therefore, a handkerchief ready for him every day, and he seldom fails to want it.

Our theatres have done this year the reverse of what they do in general. They usually reserve the new pieces for the winter season, which begins in November, after their excursion to Fontainbleau, and ends at Easter. This year they scarcely gave us any thing new during the winter; and since Easter, they have been eager to bring forward new pieces. As the French theatre now plays alternately the *Gamester*, and the *Unexpected Wager*, the Italian theatre, to support a competition with it, brought out, on the fourth of this month, *Sophy; or, the Concealed Marriage:* a comedy, in three acts, interspersed with songs.

This play is taken from an English piece, the *Clandestine Marriage*, the joint production of Mr. Garrick and Mr. Colman, which was played last year in London with great applause. I do not know the English piece; but it is said to be replete with wit, and that the contrast between the manners of the mercantile class, and the class of nobles, is very amusing. If Mr. Garrick be not as great a dramatic writer as he is an actor, he has written many things that are very pleasant and lively; he excels particularly in prologues and epilogues, a species of writing peculiar to the English. Mr. Colman, who was at Paris for a

very short time some years ago, is said to have considerable talents; he is the author of several comedies which have all succeeded on the London stage, and he has just published a translation of Terence, which is well spoken of.

The author of the *Concealed Marriage* has thought proper to *conceal* his name, and the success of his piece has not been such as to render it probable that he will quit his incognito. A secret must, however, be here divulged; it is, that Madame Riccoboni, having dedicated her last novel to Mr. Garrick, he sent her in return the comedy of the *Clandestine Marriage*. It is, therefore, strongly rumoured, that Madame Riccoboni, in concert with her friend Mademoiselle Theresa, who was formerly an actress upon the Italian theatre, undertook to enrich the French stage with this piece. Let the two friends contend for the honours of it, they must remain with her who is the least afraid of wronging Mr. Garrick, or who is the most ready to acknowledge that she has no talents for dramatic writing. Hitherto, however, the secret has been very well kept.

July, 1768.

A work has just been published at Yverdun in Switzerland, entitled *Travels of a Philosopher, or Observations on the Manners and Arts of the Nations of Asia, Africa, and America.* As this phi-

losopher is a French traveller, let us pause a moment to examine his passports. His name is Poivre, and he is at present Intendant of the Isle of France; he is a native of Lyons, and was in his early youth a member of some religious order, either Minim, or Picpus, I believe. Having embarked, in this quality, as almoner on board a vessel of the East India Company, the first cannon-ball fired against the vessel carried away his arm. The reverend father almoner thought it was not worth while to be a monk, to have his arm taken off by a cannon-ball, and quitting his cowl, entered into the secular service of the Company, where he obtained the post of a supercargo, and the reputation of a man of extraordinary merit. After the last war, the government thought that his talents might be rendered useful to them, and when the King, some years ago, took the Isles of France out of the hands of the Company, M. Poivre was sent thither as Intendant.

The little work entitled the *Travels of a Philosopher*, contains two memorials addressed by him to the administration of the India Company, and to the Agricultural Society of Lyons, to give them an account of the political observations made during his voyage from France to China. The title given to the work is very appropriate, since M. Poivre has in effect the simple and just eye of a philosopher; but I know not why it

promises observations upon America, since the author travels only in Asia and Africa; I do not think he ever was in America. It is certain, that he only mentions it transitorily to condemn the treatment of the negroes, to observe that South America is covered with marshes, with briars, and with forests, and that North America is a miserable country without agriculture, and inhabited by a little savage race of men. It is singular enough, that the author has not thought the English colonies in this part of the world worth mentioning; those colonies so flourishing and which have already occasioned no small embarrassment to the mother country;—those colonies which, if the government of England does not proceed with the utmost wisdom and moderation, though with the utmost resolution, will ere long carve her out work of a very troublesome nature.

M. Poivre, convinced that a traveller has rarely the time and means of making sufficient observations to form a just idea of the government, of the police, and the manners of the people whom he visits, has adhered to a method tolerably infallible, and no less simple, on which he grounds his judgments. Wherever he goes he examines with particular attention the public markets and the fields; from the liberty and affluence that reign in the one, from the riches or poverty of the other, he draws his conclusions with regard to the prosperity or misery of the

people. It is under this point of view that he conducts the reader from the western coasts of Africa to the very extremity of Asia, in a manner no less interesting than instructive, but too concise; we cannot forbear lamenting at every page, that so penetrating an observer has not entered into much more ample details.

When we read what this author has written upon the Isles of France and Bourbon, and compare it with what history relates concerning our other colonies, and with what has passed at Cayenne in our own days, we shall not be able to resist feeling a strong conviction, that God has not blessed the French nation with the proper talents and spirit for forming colonies. This people, endowed with so many precious and amiable qualities, has none of those which are requisite to succeed in enterprises of such a nature. Their vivacity leads them to do in one day what ought to be the work of a year. It destroys, it throws down, it raises up, it operates, and when nothing more remains to be done, it begins to reflect; the sad discovery is then made, that almost as many follies as acts have been committed, and disgust ensues. That lightness and inconstancy with which the nation is reproached, that ennui to which we are so subject, are the necessary consequences of the ardour and vivacity of these first movements; the fire is too violent to last. What has happened in the Isle of France,

according to M. Poivre's account, is an instance single in its kind. Scarcely had the French colonists established themselves there, than they began to clear the ground with most incredible ardour; whole forests were burnt down, and not a single tree left standing, nor till this grand operation was completed did the idea ever seem to strike any one, that the rains, which are the only fertilization required for the lands in this island, follow exactly the direction of the forests, stop there, and do not fall upon the parts that are cleared; besides this, they are deprived of all shelter from the violence of the winds which are so fatal to the fruits of the earth in these climates. M. Poivre observes, that the Dutch, who found no wood at the Cape of Good Hope, planted trees to shelter their habitations, while the French, who found the Isle of France covered with wood, have destroyed it to form a colony altogether barren, and exposed to every wind under heaven. The Dutch, had they landed on the Isle of France, would have put their noses out into the air to smell out the good and evil of their new abode; and before they applied the axe or the firebrand to a single tree, would have fully ascertained which way the winds and the rains usually came. But the Frenchman, confident in the beginning, is persuaded that the elements themselves will be submissive to the plan he has adopted; and when he finds that the elements still

go their own way, he is disheartened. The parliaments, however, have not yet decided the great question, which side is in the wrong.

A man who, like our traveller, attaches a very high price to agriculture, must, of course, be enchanted with the government of China. This sentiment M. Poivre shares in common with a great number of our most sensible and reflecting men. Let me be permitted, however, to propose to him some doubts on this subject. Not that I believe the government of China less wise than ours; but I cannot grant it a very great superiority over us, without examining the title upon which its panegyrists rest its pretensions to that superiority.

I would ask, in the first place, whether, supposing we had no history of the ancient Romans, that we possessed none of their books, none of their monuments,—whether, I say, if this were the case, there is a single mind in Europe, entertaining any ideas of justice, who would permit themselves to form an opinion respecting the genius and manners of the Romans, from the reports made by some Greek merchants, whom trade might have conducted to Rome, or of some philosophers of Athens, whom a love of prating alone had carried thither. And yet even here the comparison is not perfectly equal, since the Romans would have received the Greek merchant hospitably, would have suffered him to live in the

very heart of Rome, would have kept up a constant intercourse with him, whereas the Chinese do not grant any of these favours to the Europeans, who frequent their country. And when I am willing to do so much honour to our missionaries, as to compare them with the philosophers of Athens, it must be well understood that I cannot by any means suppose them to be honoured with equal confidence by those whom they are visiting. In fact, it is impossible to form a just idea of any nation, without living, for a long time, in the midst of it, without becoming, as it were, incorporated with it;—it is, at least, necessary to understand its language perfectly, to have studied deeply its writers in every way, before we can reasonably permit ourselves to form any opinion as to its laws, its manners, its genius. Truth is not to be obtained from the testimony of one traveller, zealous to adhere to it faithfully, or even of many such travellers; it is only to be collected from a great number of writings, both true and false, the productions of men of every rank, station, and profession, in different ages, and of different epochs; it even, sometimes, penetrates the most forcibly through the falsehoods of a passionate or corrupt writer, and becomes so much the more powerful, in proportion to the pains he has taken to conceal it. Let me ask then, candidly and sincerely, are we in possession, I will not say of *all* these means for knowing the true

state of China, but I will say, of even a single one of them. We have, however, unhappily, means enough of finding even travellers, who appear the most anxious to give us nothing but truth, perpetually at contradiction with themselves. They all, for example, agree in the subtlety, the craft, the duplicity, of the Chinese character, yet they all concur in extolling the happiness of the Chinese people, and the goodness of their government. But a crafty people and an enslaved people are synonymous terms in the eyes of a philosopher: craft is the buckler, behind which the weak man shelters himself from the buffets of the strong; never do a happy and free people make use of such a buckler. Go into modern Greece, and you will find among the inhabitants such suppleness, such cunning, such a happy disposition to cheating and artifice, that you will immediately consider Alcibiades and Pericles as mere blockheads, compared with their descendants. The same thing may be said of Italian pliability, when compared with the address even of the most corrupt times of Roman freedom. It remains to determine, which of the two periods, in both countries, you think most to be admired.

Let us speak the truth. We suffer from the abuses, the bad laws, the vices of our age, and of our nation; they wound our eyes, they fret and gall us at every moment, and leave, at length, a melancholy and painful impression on our minds,

The abuses of remote times, or of a remote country, only shock us by report, and do not occasion us any distressing sensations; this is the reason, why past times always appear preferable to the present, why people of distant countries always appear to us wiser and more virtuous than ourselves. Here has been at all times the rock of the greatest and the best minds; their own age and their own nation have always been found guilty at their tribunal. Their admiration, even of past times and of different nations, increases in an inverse ratio to their distance. In effect, the greater that distance is, the more scope has the imagination for exercising its powers, the more free is the field left for them to create and impute to them whatever qualities they please. We are constantly assured that, for more than four thousand years, the government and the manners of China have not experienced the least change; and that may be true, to the eye that only examines China from the Observatory at Paris. We have, for more than four thousand years, examined the moon, without finding the least change in her; and it is much worse when we carry our researches to the sun, and to other stars yet farther removed from us; not the least innovation, not the remotest tendency to revolution is to be perceived. Console yourselves, however, O Frenchmen! you, who, in the space of a century, may be reproached with five distinct revolutions in your manners,—

you, who, under the reign of Louis XIV. young, vigorous, and a conqueror, were so different from what you became under Louis XIV. old, beaten, and the husband of that miserable bigot, Madame de Maintenon,—you, who, beneath the regency of that amiable scapegrace, Philip of Orleans, were still another people,—who afterwards, under the tutorage of the avaricious and narrow-minded Cardinal de Fleury, experienced another change, and still another, when the light, spread by Voltaire, by Montesquieu, and other philosophers, began to strike and dazzle your eyes, so that you had difficulty to stand against it,—you, I say, who have so rapidly undergone all these changes, console yourselves!—While your philosophers reproach you with these variations, the Voltaires and the Poivres of China, if they deign to cast their eyes upon you, see you always the same; and, I dare assure you, that, though an earthquake should overturn half Europe, and totally change the face of all the countries, to the inhabitants of the moon the aspect of our globe would not experience the smallest change.

I earnestly recommend to every reflecting mind, to read the Chinese romance, which was so badly translated into our language a few years ago. This little work will teach them more than all the travellers of all countries combined: I should like much to know what M. Poivre thinks of this romance. I agree with him, that the law, which

enjoins the viceroys of every province in the Chinese empire, to send annually to the court, a list of all the labourers who have distinguished themselves in their profession, is a very fine one. The list is presented to the Emperor, who rewards and encourages these meritorious persons with honours and distinctions. But I must observe, that we have a great number of laws in France equally fine; one, for example, which orders, that the king shall not have, among his troops, a single officer whose services, whose talents, whose good or bad qualities, are not perfectly known at the office of the administration for the war department. But, notwithstanding this inquisition, will M. Poivre venture to assure me that merit was never forgotten in the war department; that mediocrity of talents, or even demerit, has never carried away the rewards which ought to have belonged to superior merit alone. It is, that a fine law, which only orders a fine thing, resembles a fine moral maxim; it is an admirable thing to read, if you please, but neither the one nor the other have the least real effect upon the manners of the people. That would indeed be a fine law which, in ordering a fine thing, could insure its execution. M. Poivre ought to have informed us how, in China, they can hinder the favourites of the viceroys, the persons protected by his clerks and secretaries, those who second their private views, which are often in perfect opposition to the

public welfare, those, in short, who have the means of purchasing certificates of a merit to which they have no claim,—how such people, I say, can be prevented getting their names put upon the lists presented to the Emperor, in preference to those who have real merit, but cannot stoop to intrigue, —who are without favour, without protection.

I will not deny the justice of our philosophical traveller's remark, that the great roads in France are too wide, and too numerous, consequently occupy too much of the land;—I will not dispute with him the utility of canals, a subject not sufficiently attended to in Europe;—but when he regrets the land which we have laid down in grass for the feed of horses, instead of being sown with corn;—when he tells us, that the Chinese prefer feeding men to feeding horses, I cannot be in extasies at this preference. I can never regret, that the men who, among us, must replace the labour of horses, and other beasts of burden, are not born. We might have two millions more of porters and drivers of wheelbarrows in France, but the nation would neither be richer, happier, more powerful, or more respected. Add to this, that the use of horses, in shortening the time necessary for the transport of persons, as well as commodities, accelerates all business, expedites the general circulation, doubles, nay trebles, time, and really prolongs the life of every citizen. These considerations, as it appears to me, amply

justify our sacrificing something to the support of horses; and I am astonished that a consideration so forcible can have escaped a man of M. Poivre's solid sense and understanding.

One cannot read, without being deeply affected, the description given by our philosopher, of the ceremonies that take place every year at the opening of the lands, when the Emperor himself drives the plough, and cultivates a field. This ceremony takes place in the month of March; and every viceroy does the same in his province. M. Poivre saw it at Canton with singular pleasure; and one may easily imagine all the noble, pathetic, and affecting reflections that would be made by an European philosopher, in contemplating this spectacle. It remains to be known, whether the Emperor, who gives occasion to these reflections, attaches a single one of those noble and affecting sentiments to the spectacle he is presenting. Let some Poivre of China be sent into France, let him arrive at Versailles on the morning of Maunday Thursday, he will find one of the most powerful monarchs of Europe at the feet of a dozen poor old men washing them; and soon after see this same monarch, accompanied by all the princes of his royal house, wait upon these old men at dinner. What grand and affecting ideas would this spectacle present to the mind of our Chinese philosopher, on being informed that it was renewed every year in com-

memoration of the Confucius of Europe, having washed the feet of his disciples; he would consider it as one of the finest human institutions that the world could boast. What can, in fact, be wiser than to recal once in a year to the masters of the earth, the primitive equality, and the tie of fraternity, by which all men are united. If this Chinese were to return home, nearly as our travellers return from his country, he would give so affecting a description of the ceremony, that none of his countrymen would be able to hear it unmoved; what then would be his astonishment, if he were afterwards to hear that it is only a matter of idle form consecrated by custom, which leads to no consequences whatever. That the prince, by whom it is performed, is never led by it to make a single reflection which may tend to the public good; and that any philosopher who should judge proper to address him, during the ceremony, in a pathetic speech analogous to the subject, would stand a very good chance of being sent to the Bastille; the governor of which would certainly not wash his feet;—that for many ages the princes, who follow the Romish ritual, have always performed this ceremony once in a year, without its being productive of good to any body excepting to the poor men who get a dinner on that day;—that the assistants are no more moved by the spectacle than the actors; and that the very M. Poivre, who was so deeply

interested by the ceremony of opening the lands at Canton, may have been present at Versailles twenty times when the king washed the poor men's feet, without experiencing the slightest emotion; without being able to abstract his thoughts a single moment from his business in the office of the marine. If ever I were to meet this Chinese philosopher and M. Poivre together, I would ask them how men are to be prevented getting accustomed to every thing?

A company of merchants at Nantes having named one of their ships *The Voltaire*, and having imparted to the godfather what they had done, this illustrious man, who rather shrinks from such kind of distinctions, has addressed a discourse to his godchild which you shall read, after I have given you the answer made by the godfather to the person who sent him the intelligence.

Letter from de Voltaire to M. de Montaudoin, a member of several Academies, and correspondent to the Royal Academy of Sciences at Paris, at Nantes.

"Ferney, June 2d, 1768.

"Sir,

"Hitherto it has not been in my power to boast of having conducted my little bark very fortunately in the world; but since you have condescended to give my name to one of your vessels,

henceforward I defy all tempests. You do me an honour of which I certainly am not worthy, and which no man of letters ever before received; but the less I merit it, the more grateful I feel. Ships have been named hitherto after Neptune, the Tritons, the Sirens, Griffins, Ministers of State, and Saints, the latter have never failed of arriving happily at their destination, but never before was one named after a mere compiler of verse and prose.

"If I were somewhat younger, I would embark on board your ship, and seek out some country where fanaticism and calumny are unknown. I would, if you please, add to our party the Jesuits Patouillet and Nonotte, with the *good Freron*, formerly a Jesuit, and land them all at Civita Vecchia. Nor do I think it would be amiss to add some convulsionaries, or convulsionists; formerly it was a custom upon some particular occasions to tie up a number of monkeys and cats together in a bag and throw them into the sea.

"I should suppose, that the English will suffer me to go freely over the seas wherever I please, since they know, that I have always had a great taste for them and for their works. In the year 1741, they took a ship filled with Bulls of the Crusade, with Indulgences, and Agni Dei. I flatter myself, that your vessel will not carry such merchandize; they may make a large

fortune in the other world, but cargoes of a different kind must be carried out to gain a fortune here.

"If the vessel should happen to make a voyage to the East Indies, I will request permission to trouble the Captain with a letter to a Bramin, at Benares, with whom I am in correspondence. He has proved to me, that the Bramins have been in existence more than four thousand years. He is a very learned and a very rational man, and is, moreover, much better baptized than any of us, for he plunges into the Ganges on all great festivals. I have in my solitude many correspondents in very remote parts, but I have not had any yet which has done me more honour, or given me more pleasure than yours.

"I have not been able to write with my own hand, being very ill, but that trembling hand assures you, that I shall be to the last moment of my life, Sir, your most obedient, &c.

"VOLTAIRE *."

Among the library of the late M. Gaignat, a manuscript has been found which cannot be inserted in the catalogue about to be published, and which could not with safety be publicly sold. It

* The discourse to the ship being published among the works of M. de Voltaire, it was thought superfluous to insert it here.—*French Editor.*

is deposited at Debure's, the bookseller's, where I have seen it by the favour of M. de Gaignat's heirs. This work is the *Tales of La Fontaine*, in two volumes large quarto, or small folio, written upon vellum paper. The character is the most beautiful imaginable, and the text particularly correct. At the head of each tale is a drawing representing the subject of it, and at the end are arabesques as vignettes, executed with infinite grace and delicacy. The greater part of the drawings are too licentious, but others are not enough so. It appears to me, that whatever tone is given to any thing, it should be kept up throughout, that great contrasts always shock; when I am in a bad house, I do not expect to see any pretension to order or decorum. M. Gaignat had this manuscript executed at his own house, and under his own eyes, by two distinguished artists. The Sieur Monchaussé has in his writing imitated exactly the finest engraved characters; the illuminations are beautifully painted by the Sieur de Marolles, a painter of very high reputation. It is said, that the work cost eighteen thousand livres; this was paying extremely dear for a fancy which, after all, had nothing to recommend it very strongly. Such a sum would have been sufficient to establish eighteen worthy families comfortably in the world. The bookseller has set this manuscript at two hundred louis; that is to say not less will be taken for it, and it will be the property of the person

who makes the largest offer beyond it; but the sale must be made in private. It has been reported, that many of the drawings were nearly effaced; but this is not true; they appeared to me, on the contrary extremely well preserved*.

It is said, with great truth, that paternal affection is stronger than life, and that it is of all our sentiments and affections the last extinguished. Authors, who have not always children to lavish their affections upon, bestow them upon their works, and have that in common with the weakness of fathers, that the largest portion of this affection is often bestowed on the most defective of the children. The poor president Henault has attained, has even, I believe, passed the age of fourscore, but he can now only be said to vegetate; he gives a supper every evening, without being capable of enjoying society, and will probably at some moment slip out of the world without be-

* This choice manuscript was, in 1769, purchased by the Duke de Choiseul, Minister at War, for ten thousand livres. From him it passed into the hands of M. Debure the elder, a bookseller of great note for the extent of his bibliographical knowledge. He kept it for some time, and afterwards sold it to M. Paris, a relation of M. Paris de Meatmartel, whose library was carried over into England in 1789, and sold publicly in March 1791. The manuscript was on this occasion purchased by a rich ship owner for three hundred and fifteen pounds.—What has become of it since is not known. *Note by the French Editor.*

ing aware of it, in the midst of a score of guests, whose appetites will be in no way affected by the occurrence. He has now vegetated for some years in this sort of half lethargy; his passion for his works is the only thing which has power to rouse him. His suppers may lose their reputation since his palate has lost all powers of discrimination and his cook may be rogue enough to go out and cook for hire at other houses, while a wretched myrmidon is left to perform his office at home, but the care of his works will amuse his last moments, will procure him the only sensation of which he is susceptible, the only pleasure which he can taste.

With the assistance of the Abbé Boudot, a sort of underling in the King's library, and one of old devoted to the poor president; the latter has just published a new edition of his *Chronological Abridgement of the history of France*. But after having thus endowed, for the last time, a darling child, his paternal tenderness has recalled to his mind a sort of bastard, the obscure fruit of an ignoble passion, and his weakness has led him to acknowledge her before his death, and to establish her in life. This bastard is a vestal by name *Cornelia*. About fifty-five years are now past since a tragedy by him under such a name appeared upon the French theatre; its papa pretends that it was extremely well received, yet neither its success, nor, till now, even its name, ever reached my ears: nay not a single person to whom I have

put the question can say that they ever heard it mentioned. Although in 1713, the year in which it was played, the French theatre was abandoned to the feeble tragedies of Campistron, to the harsh tragedies of Crebillon, to the cold tragedies of La Grange Chancel, and to the tender and insipid tragedies of La Mothe, that consequently the public taste must, spite of Boileau's *Art of Poetry*, and of the fine versification of Racine, have been very bad, it seems that it was not sufficiently so to relish the vestal *Cornelia*. Had she been as eminently successful as her papa pretends, why did he never present her before the public through the medium of the press, and why was his rigour in withholding her never made a subject of complaint by any body?

The abode of Mr. Horace Walpole at Paris, has been the æra of several literary misdemeanors. In the first place the fabrication of the letter from the King of Prussia to Jean Jacques Rousseau, which had so large a share in the quarrel between the latter and David Hume. In the second place it is this son of the celebrated Minister of King George the Second, of that Minister who boasted that he had in his portfolio a tarif of the prices of all men's probity in England, a document to which he very often had recourse with great success;—it is the beforementioned son of this Minister who engaged the poor president Henault to acknowledge before his death the bastard Cornelia, the

charming vestal who was so well and so properly situated in her convent. Mr. Walpole has in his house at Strawberry Hill a private printing press for his own use in which he has had an edition of this tragedy printed, upon very fine paper, with very beautiful types, but very incorrectly.

The president has dedicated his piece, as was certainly most proper, to the man who has been the occasion of its seeing the light; in it he warmly expresses his thanks for the honourable and magnificent establishment which her patron has been pleased to procure this orphan. Justly indeed does he give her such an appellation, since he assures us that he shall never depart from his incognito; and since Mr. Walpole's edition is not to be sold, it is very much to be presumed, that the vestal herself will preserve as strict an incognito as her papa chooses to do. The president does not conceal that this tragedy, the production of his early youth, was the offspring of a first passion, and he is very apprehensive that it savours too much of its warmth. Alas, poor president! he may have been an amiable lover;—but a passionate one!—I cannot in conscience do him that injustice. He is of opinion that we can only be in love once in our lives, that the other attachments we contract, are mere fleeting tastes, compacts of convenience, arrangements arising from the state of society. In this he may perhaps be in the right; but if in his first and real passion, the lover was never more

passionate than the author, he certainly cannot boast of having been the most ardent lover of his age. Happily it is not a necessary test of an ardent lover that he should be able to write an impassioned tragedy. It is well known, that the president was in his day a man whose society was much prized, though he was somewhat frivolous; he was more particularly caressed by the fair sex. He was very capable of writing a pretty madrigal or love song, but for a tragedy—that is quite another thing. He says, that his piece after having been produced by the chance of love, finishes much more nobly by being the pledge of the friendship with which he is honoured by the illustrious editor.

The little novel of *The Huron* presented to us last year by M. de Voltaire, is particularly admired. An author who had never written any thing but this trifle, would justly be considered as at the head of the *beaux esprits* of his country; but amidst the number of chefs-d'œuvre of every kind that we owe to this first man of his age, *The Huron* is almost lost in the world; or, if it be numbered among M. de Voltaire's titles to immortality, it is only because such another example is scarcely to be found of a man at the advanced age of seventy-four preserving all the warmth, and all the graces of imagination, all the

fire, and all the vivacity that so peculiarly characterised his early writings.

December, 1768.

The stay which the King of Denmark has made at Paris, comes no further into the views of this correspondence than inasmuch as it has any relation to learning and the arts, and the homage paid by them to his Majesty. This homage has not always been equally pure; the young monarch has been overpowered with festivities, with shows, with plays, with balls. Almost every where M. Poinsinet has been the organ of the compliments addressed, and the author of the couplets sung to him; some of the couplets are said to have been pretty. I must, however, regard it as but a sad symptom for the country when a Poinsinet can have been chosen as the elect to play the orator for the nation. I am also inclined to believe, that a little less ardour to amuse him, a little less noise, a little more calm, and a little intermission between the feasts, would have rendered his Majesty of Denmark's stay more agreeable to himself; and I am sure it would have been more conformable to the dignity of a great nation. For the rest, if with a constitution extremely delicate, a traveller King must be under the necessity of constantly dining, supping, playing, dancing, sitting up late, among five or six hundred persons whom he does not

know;—if, being extremely short-sighted, it is necessary that he should see all the pictures, and run over all the halls of the Academy of Painting in twenty minutes, it appears to me, that a King had better not travel, or at least not travel as a King.

It is not, however, here the place to reason upon the subject, or to discuss whether the Duke de Duras who was charged by the King to do the honours of his Court to the young monarch, did well to regale him with seven acts of comic-opera in one evening, and scarcely to allow him to breathe the air of Paris a single day at his ease;—leaving these questions, my business is to acquit myself of my duty as a historian, by recording what actually did pass; by preserving in these archives the best, or the least bad pieces which were called forth into blossom by the visit of the King of Denmark, and which have not yet been made public.

The Duchess de Villeroi took upon herself to do the honours of Mademoiselle Clairon at her private theatre. This celebrated actress played there twice in presence of his Danish Majesty, the hereditary Prince of Saxe-Gotha, and a select company. The first time, she performed the character of Dido, the second that of Roxana in Racine's tragedy of Bajazet. After the play, she was presented by the Duchess to her august auditor, who took a ring from his own finger and put it upon hers; but, notwithstanding this piece of

royal courtesy, I know from good authority he was not so fortunate as to obtain the success he wished with the divine Clairon. In her quality of Dido, she did not find him sufficiently tender, in her quality of Roxana, he did not appear sufficiently humble, and in her quality of Clairon, he was not sufficiently penetrated with admiration.

The French and Italian theatres, with the comic-opera united to the latter, gave several pieces which were particularly desired by the Duke de Duras, and on the days when his Majesty honoured the theatres with his presence, the bills announced that the performances were *by order*. This never failed to draw a crouded house; but sometimes the young King, too much fatigued perhaps with the revels of the preceding day, or perhaps indisposed, was obliged to decline going to the theatre when he was expected. Whenever he went he was received by the pit with great clapping of hands, while the company in the boxes rose up and remained standing till he was seated; at his departure, they again rose and remained standing till he was out of the box.

The Royal Academy of Music, as it is called, that is to say, the Grand-Opera, had the honour of performing four times before this illustrious guest. The performances were *Alcimadura*, an opera written in the Languedocian tongue translated into French, the words and music by Mondonville;...the *Queen of Golconda*, the words by

M. Sedaine, the music by Monsigni ;—*Silvia*, a pastoral, the words by M. Laujon, the music by Trial and Burton, managers of the theatre ;—and lastly, *Eneas and Lavinia*, an ancient poem by Fontenelle, composed by a certain Sieur Dauvergne, from whose music, Heaven preserve your ears !—I have heard it said, that his Majesty, notwithstanding all the efforts he made, could not in any way reconcile himself to French music and singing.

One of our poets, M. Barthe, offered a whimsical piece of homage to the Danish monarch. His Majesty being present at the performance of a play of this poet's, *False Infidelities*, as he was going out of the house the poet thrust himself in between him and M. de Duras, saying, very familiarly, " May one presume, Sire, to ask how you like the piece ?"—" Tis extremely pretty," said the King, somewhat astonished and confounded. " May the author then," answered the poet, " be permitted to request your Majesty's " acceptance of a copy." This trait it is said M. Barthe has stolen from M. de La Condamine.

The Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture paid a much handsomer compliment to his Majesty. During the twenty minutes which M. de Duras allowed for his seeing the halls of the Academy, the King desired to be shewn a little faun in marble, executed by M. Sally, sculptor to the Academy, on his reception as an Academi-

cian. This faun has been much celebrated, and the Academy, in exhibiting it to the young King, desired that he would do them the favour of accepting it, to which his Majesty graciously condescended. M. Sally has for the last fifteen years resided in Denmark, where he has executed an equestrian statue of the late King; he is now at the head of the Academy at Copenhagen.

M. Dorat, who is in the habit of addressing epistles to all the fair ladies, and all the celebrated men he does not know, has not failed to profit by so fair an opportunity of celebrating a young King of twenty; for M. Dorat is particularly partial to youth.

During the first month of his Danish Majesty's stay, the Duke de Duras presented almost all the persons of any note to him; none but the men of letters, or in other words, the philosophers, were omitted. His Majesty being desirous of having them introduced to him, the Baron de Gleichen, his envoy extraordinary at the Court of France, undertook the charge. M. de Duras's yielding his office on this occasion to the Baron, was considered by some politicians as a mode of declaring the philosophers despoiled of their character of Frenchmen, as bastard children disowned by their mother country. One thing is very certain, and that is, that they were the only Frenchmen not presented to the royal visitor by M. de Duras. They may, however, be assured,

that they lost nothing by it. The Baron de Gleichen acquitted himself of his function in the most agreeable manner possible. He invited them to dine with him on the nineteenth of November, on which day the King appointed to visit his minister at the latter's hotel, and stay to dinner with all the philosophy of Paris. This project, however, did not succeed; the balls and festivities he had frequented, occasioned his Majesty to catch a cold, which obliged him to keep his room some days. The body of philosophers were, therefore, appointed to repair the next day to the Hotel d'Yorck, which was occupied by his Majesty.—The ceremony passed with a great deal of decorum; we were eighteen in number, that is to say, M. de Mairan, M. de Cassini, M. Duhamel, M. d'Alembert, M. Duclos, the Abbé Barthelemy, the Baron d'Holbach, M. de Crebillon, the Abbé Condillac, the Abbé Morellet, Mr. de Grimm, M. Bernard, M. Diderot, M. Saurin, M. Helvetius, M. Marmontel, M. Watelet, and M. de La Condamine. Chance had placed them in a circle in this order when the King came out of his apartment, and appeared in the saloon. There was only myself too much, and M. de Buffon who was wanted. But this illustrious philosopher has been at his seat in Burgundy for the last fifteen months; and as to myself, I have no other apology to make but that I had not solicited this honour any more than the others. The King first went round the

circle, M. de Gleichen presenting the one after the other, naming each one by his name, when his Majesty said something obliging to every one, relative to his works or his reputation. After this first turn, the King made a second, stopping to talk to some of the leading men. To M. d'Alembert he said, "*I did not think there had been any ecclesiastics among you.*"..."*Sire,*" answered M. d'Alembert, "*we have even doctors of the Sorbonne,*" and he pointed to the Abbé Morellet, who is in fact not a doctor, but a licentiate in theology. The King asked him afterwards whether he had eaten with the King of Prussia; M. d'Alembert answered, that he had enjoyed that honour every day for three months. This question was thought somewhat singular, and was rather conjectured to refer to his Majesty's projected philosophical dinner at M. de Gleichen's, as well as to some hints which it was suspected had been given him upon the subject. The King afterwards owned to M. Bernard, that he could not reconcile himself to the French music. To M. Diderot his Majesty said, "M. de Gleichen and "you are great friends;"—to which the philosopher replied, "Tis only under that title, Sire, "that I appear here."—"I hope," continued the King, "that you live much together."—"My in-"tercourse with him," said M. de Gleichen, "both entertains and instructs me." The King afterwards talked to M. Saurin about his tragedy

of *Beverley*, which his indisposition had prevented his seeing; and this gave occasion to some remarks from M. Helvetius upon the English theatre in general, and the dramas of Shakespeare in particular. His Majesty talked to M. Marmontel of his Belisarius, to M. Watelet upon the arts, and to M. de La Condamine upon his travels. The audience lasted altogether more than half an hour. Towards the end, M. de Bernstorff came in.

In order to purify his Danish Majesty from the pestilential air that philosophy might have spread around him, M. de Duras carried him three days after to the Sorbonne, and to the college of Plessis. If the King paid some attention to this college, it was apparently for the purpose of avoiding ever having any thing like it in his own states. I do not believe there is any place in the world where the college discipline is so bad as at Paris. Towards the end of the King of Denmark's visit M. de Duras proposed his attending at the private sittings of the three Academies. Accordingly on the third of December in the afternoon he went successively to the French Academy, to the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles-Lettres, and to the Academy of Sciences. The papers have given a very detailed account of what passed at these sittings. The speech delivered by M. d'Alembert, on the occasion, at the Academy

of Sciences, is to be found in the Memoirs of that Academy.

Such are the principal events, as far as literature and the arts and sciences are concerned, which passed during the residence of this august visitor in the French capital. This residence was protracted to seven weeks, during which he had not the power of disposing of twenty-four hours of his time according to his own taste, if we except the five days when he was confined to his apartment by indisposition.

All the hereditary Princes who come to Paris go and visit the retreat of Denis Diderot, the philosopher. The visit he received from the hereditary Prince of Brunswick Wolfenbuttel cannot be forgotten; he has since received a similar one from the hereditary Prince of Saxe-Gotha. It was I who introduced the first of these Princes to him; it was not possible for me to play the part of introducer a second time without betraying the secret which we wished to keep concealed. The Prince of Saxe-Gotha therefore presented himself in company with another traveller of Strasbourg who was acquainted with the philosopher, calling himself M. Ehrlich, a young man from Switzerland. The philosopher received him with his usual kindness, and seemed to take infinite pleasure in conversing with him. Some days after he found

M. Ehrlich at dinner at the Baron d'Holbach's; he went to him with open arms, embraced him eagerly and said; "Aha! who would have ex- "pected to find you in the synagogue?" During dinner he asked me whether I was acquainted with that young man? to which I answered coldly: *a little.* "He is a charming youth," said he, "In- "deed," he continued, "several young men "so amiable, so well-instructed, so modest, so "steady, and so discreet, have come hither on "visits from your country, that they render the "youth of my own insupportable to me. This," he added, "is not the first, or the only young "man, of such distinguished merit and modesty "that I have seen from your nation, barbarous as "we are tempted to believe it; I have seen more "than one."—After dinner he was informed who M. Ehrlich really was, but that made no change whatever in his sentiments.

The Abbé Millot, preacher to the King, formerly Grand Vicar of the diocese of Lyons, published fifteen or eighteen months ago, *Elements of the History of France*, in two volumes; a work from which he has derived much credit. He was, in consequence of it, invited by the Infant Duke of Parma to be royal professor of history in that university. He has very recently published *Elements of the History of England from its Origin under the Romans, to the Reign of George the*

Second, three large volumes 12mo. dedicated to his patron the Infant Duke. The idea of writing Elements of History, and substituting them for chronological abridgments is a very good one. These *abridgments* are excellent for annihilating the science of history, in the same manner that magazines and other publications of a similar kind, are admirable for the destruction of literature. In such abridgments it is impossible to give any exposition of facts or of the motives by which they were influenced, to present, in a manner corresponding to their importance, striking pictures and views, or to sketch characters. What then is their use?—Only to preserve dates, intermingling with them some fine-sounding phrases which shew that the author has talents, or at least thinks that he has. They are also of some use as a repertory for pupils, and a guide to professors in compiling a course of lectures on history. This is the use made of them in Germany; the professor refers to the dates in his *Abridgment* to mark the connection of facts, they save him some trouble in searching out and ascertaining them. The *Elements*, such as the Abbé Millot has conceived and executed them, permit the compiler to dwell upon any epoch particularly interesting, to develop the principal facts, and to give a sufficiently extended view of them; they are at least of great utility for young people if they are not of much to men of learning, whereas the abridgments are

alike useless to the latter and hurtful to the former. I have already given my testimony in favour of the Abbé Millot; I allow him great credit for having, though a priest, written his *Elements of History* with a tone of great liberality, so that they may be put into the hands of young people without any fear of poisoning their minds by those detestable principles which have for too long a time corrupted and brutalized mankind. The Abbé Millot is not a man who takes deep views of his subject, nor can he be said to have a very enlightened mind; he is merely a man of good common sense, with a just and upright spirit; one in whom the prejudices of his profession have not extinguished all principles of justice and humanity; his style has nothing striking in it, either good or bad. It would certainly be better that history should only be treated by men of genius and eloquence, by statesmen, by discerning and enlightened philosophers; but since we have for a long time had the misfortune to see it a prey to monks, and to all that was most abject and corrupt in literature, are we not fortunate in finding at the present moment men with honest and liberal minds at least, if not possessed of eminent talents, turning their attention to the subject, and endeavouring to render the study of history less dangerous, and less wearisome to young people? When I reflect that only three years ago a monk of Sainte Genevieve, in a *History of the League*,

compared the revocation of the edict of Nantes to a chirurgical operation, to the necessary but painful amputation of an arm or a thigh;—when I think that this history, breathing such sentiments, has been to a certain degree successful among us, I am almost ready to erect a statue to the Abbé Millot, especially if it could but be erected on the ruins of every convent in Europe. We may at least assure ourselves, that this honest and liberal-minded ecclesiastic will never treat as a chirurgical amputation, proscriptions so horrible in themselves, and so injurious to the country.

February, 1769.

The excommunication enjoyed by actors in France, does not admit their partaking in the sacrament of marriage any more than in the other sacraments. Hitherto, when an actor or actress would marry, they were obliged to renounce the stage, and by virtue of such a renunciation, the archbishop or his ordinary granted permission for the benediction to be pronounced upon the marriage; this ceremony performed, the first gentleman of the King's chamber sent an order from his Majesty to the newly blessed, to return to the theatre; an order which must not be disobeyed. The archbishop, desirous to place religion above this kind of juggle, declared last year, when Molé was desirous of uniting his destiny with that of the fair Mademoiselle d'Epinay, that he would never

grant permission to any player to be married, unless he had a declaration signed by the four gentlemen of the chamber, that they would not issue a royal mandate to order his returning to the stage. Thus the tender Molé and his charming enamorata were obliged to live, as report says they had previously done, after the manner of husband and wife, without being husband and wife *de facto*. Some weeks ago, however, means were found to slide into the hands of the archbishop, among a number of other papers which he was to sign, the permission for this marriage. The good prelate not having the least suspicion of such a turn, signed the paper without reading it, and thus did the fond lovers trick him out of the sacrament. The marriage being known, people began immediately to say, that the archbishop was somewhat relaxed in his severity, and would now permit players to marry without their renouncing the theatre. But the spirit of God had not so entirely forsaken his servant Christopher de Beaumont. Informed of the trick played him, and not being able to revoke the sacrament, he put the priest who had given the nuptial benediction under an interdict, to teach him, as he said, never again to trust, in a matter of such importance, to a permission signed. As the poor priest, however, is very much beloved by the rigid prelate, it is hoped, that after some months of penitence, he will be restored to his functions.

The poem of *The Seasons*, by M. de Saint Lambert, is at length before the public, after having been expected for fifteen or twenty years; at least he is known to have been employed in writing it for as long a time. Some detached parts have been read on various occasions to many of the author's friends, who have always feared, that he was too fastidious and too anxious to correct, till he would, by frequent corrections, weaken the poem; now that it is completed, they seem to find their opinion confirmed.

M. de Saint Lambert is a native of Lorraine. Born a gentleman, but poor, he served for a long time in a very obscure capacity in the infantry; it was only on occasion of the death of the Marchioness du Chastelet in 1749, that his name came first to be publicly known. The secret chronicle of private gallantries relates, that this celebrated woman after having lived for a long time in a very intimate connection with M. de Voltaire, at length was guilty of a little infidelity towards him in favour of M. de Saint Lambert, who was twenty years younger, though he could not write prose or poetry equally well. The consequence of this infidelity was the birth of a child which cost the mother her life; this event took place at Luneville. M. de Voltaire was not ignorant of the treason, but did not the less weep the loss of a tender friend, and a very superior

woman. As a man of sense, however, he observed a profound silence upon an adventure with which the public were but too well acquainted, and celebrated her in an elegant epitaph under the appellation of the sublime Emilia.

M. de Saint Lambert came to Paris for the first time immediately after the death of this lady, and was soon received into the best company. He brought with him the greater part of the fugitive pieces which are printed at the end of the poem upon the *Seasons*. He had begun another poem upon *Genius*, but that I believe is thrown aside. He was all his life particularly attached to the Prince de Beauveau, with whom he now lives. While King Stanislaus was alive, he divided the year between Paris and Lorraine; he had the post of an Exempt in the King of Poland's guards.—This office he sold when he obtained the commission of a Colonel in the French service, and at last quitted the army entirely, to fix himself at Paris with a very moderate fortune.

He is indisputably a man of considerable talents, but singularly dry in his manner, and serious in company to a degree almost amounting to being gloomy. I suspect, that his most decided talent, if he would have given way to it, would have led him to be dreadfully severe and caustic. But never would he permit himself to deviate into satire in his writings; a natural circumspection, founded perhaps upon a fear of re-

prisals, made him even suppress many an epigrammatic turn which came into his mind. Few people are, I believe, aware of this propensity in him, because few people are really observant, and of those that are, not many are perhaps awake to first emotions. He has proved to me by example, that it is possible to oppose with success our natural inclinations. He would perhaps ask me what has all this to do with his poem? Nothing at all I readily allow; but it is one of the inconveniences attached to celebrity, or rather a homage paid to it, that we wish not only to know the work, but the author; and one of the inconveniences attached to the task I have undertaken is, to be the true and faithful historian of all these details without any respect to persons*.

March, 1769.

The Abbé Chappe d'Auteroche, of the Royal Academy of Sciences, who was sent to Tobolsk in Siberia in 1761 to observe the transit of Venus over the sun, has published by subscription a magnificent work upon this scientific expedition; it was to have appeared in the month of July last, but owing to some delays its appearance has been

* Here follows in the original a long criticism by M. Diderot upon M. de Saint Lambert's poem of *The Seasons*, and his other poems, but it is omitted here as the remarks are not of a nature to be very interesting to the English reader.—*Translator.*

retarded to the present moment. The author is now gone to California to observe the same transit which will take place this year. The work he has published is in two volumes 4to. the first of which, on account of its thickness, is divided into two parts; it is entitled, *A Journey to Siberia undertaken in the year* 1761, *by order of his Majesty; containing an account of the Manners and Customs of the Russians, and the actual state of that Power; a Geographical Description of the Country, with the levels of the road from Paris to Tobolsk, and the Natural History of this route; Astronomical Observations, and Experiments upon Natural Electricity. Enriched with maps, plans, and profiles of the country, and with engravings representing the Customs of the Russians, their manners, their dress, the deities of the Calmucks, and many other curious and interesting objects.* Such is the modest title of the Abbé Chappe's work, such the objects he was enabled to attend to, and make himself thoroughly acquainted with, in less than a year; he having set out from Paris about the end of November, 1760, and having arrived there again from St. Petersburgh on the first of November, 1761. None but a French head could have been so singularly favoured by heaven as to become well acquainted with these matters without time to study them, as to be able to see all without looking at any thing, as to divine every thing without being a sorcerer, as to investigate

every thing in running along the road from Paris to Tobolsk, and back again. But among all the able heads with which the country abounds, I think no one hardly could have been selected with powers equal to those of our Abbé, and that the scale may very well be taken from him. It would be difficult to combine in the same subject to an equal degree, so much ignorance and boldness, so much taste for puerilities of the most minute kind, so much insipidity, so much indifference to truth. The work has but just appeared, and it is already so decried, that no person of sense will place the least confidence in it. The Academy of Sciences itself hesitates whether it ought in any sort to rely upon the astronomical observations for which the Abbé was sent into Siberia. Many of our Academicians say, that there is great reason to doubt both the accuracy of the observation, and the truth of the report. They are very much led to suspect, on comparing this report with the observations of other astronomers upon different parts of the globe, that the Abbé did not in fact see the transit at all, that the sun was veiled by clouds during the whole time that it took place, but that not being willing to lose entirely the fruits of his journey, he sat himself down to calculate in his closet the probable beginning, progress, and conclusion of the matter, and presented these calculations as the result of his observations. This suspicion is pro-

bably grounded upon something that may have stupidly or ignorantly been dropped by one or other among the companions of our astronomical adventurer. They may perhaps have said, that the sun did not appear at all that day at Tobolsk; the Abbé himself speaks of his anxiety in this most important moment of his journey, at seeing the clouds with which the horizon was covered at sunrise, but then he dwells no less upon his transports when the sun had dispersed these clouds; he speaks of all this, however, in the perfect tone of a libertine scholar. His whole work is indeed impressed with this character. It may truly be said, that he has found the art of writing a book of bad taste, of bad morals, and licentious manners; his description of the marriage ceremonies observed in Siberia, comes notoriously under the latter designation, while at the same time it is extremely probable, that there is not a word of truth in what he says; this has justly drawn upon him very heavy reproaches. The puerility of the author extends even to the plates which he has had engraved for the work. Any one would naturally suppose them consecrated to the representation of the most interesting phenomena, discoveries, and customs. By no means. Here we see the Abbé Chappe halting in the midst of the night by the light of torches and firebrands, in a narrow pass of the mountains; there the same great man is exhibited giving a splendid supper

and ball to all the good company at Ekaterinenbourg. In another place he is standing in a fierce and heroic attitude during some electrical experiments upon thunder, and upon a bar of iron suspended in the air to attract it, while terror has stretched the soldiers of his escort at his feet upon the ground, and while his companions, and the other people he had drawn together, are flying on all sides with the utmost precipitation; all this, however, gives but a feeble idea of the vast courage displayed on all occasions by the Abbé. Two thirds of his book are occupied in giving us frightful pictures of the dangers he run, and the difficulties he experienced in his journey; dangers which, notwithstanding the elaborate descriptions given of them, never terminate in the slightest accident; difficulties which if, they did occasion some inconvenience at the moment, were of a nature to be forgotten as soon as over;—such as a person with any mind would scarcely permit himself to notice even by a word *en passant*, which he would certainly disdain laboriously and minutely to detail in a work of such a nature. Another puerility to be remarked is the mania of giving fine poetical descriptions after the manner of M. de Buffon; but this latter writer has no occasion to practise the ridiculous contortions of an ape in order to make us feel his superiority and his claims to our homage.

I shall not permit myself to make any reflex-

ions upon the foundation of the work. In order to judge this properly, one ought to have travelled with the Abbé, or at least one ought to be more instructed upon the subject than I am. I must simply remark, that the want of confidence in the truth of what we read extends equally over every subject treated in it, and that the character of lightness and futility which predominates throughout, does not invite belief any more as to the alleged particular objects of his study during his journey, than to any other part. His ignorance is perpetually betraying itself by the manner in which he mentions things that every body knows. Every reader who has a spark of discernment will find the tone and manner of ignorance even where he is correct and reports known facts. He does not seem aware, for instance, that the dignities of grand General, and grand Marshal, in Poland, are two distinct ones; he has, notwithstanding, in running post over the country, seen every thing, examined every thing, investigated every thing. He is perfectly *au fait* in every particular relating to the Russian government, he knows accurately its strength by land as well as the state of its marine; he gives an exact statement of its revenue, which he fixes at sixty-seven millions of French livres, and this in so decisive a tone that I should be almost afraid to remark to him, that many travellers, at least as worthy of credit as himself, have assured me that the annual revenue of the

empire amounts to a hundred and twenty millions of livres. He even goes so far as to hazard prophecies, in imitation of Jean Jacques Rousseau, upon the power of Russia; and I am persuaded that he believes himself in a state to counsel all the cabinets of Europe upon the conduct that they ought to hold with regard to this power. A wise traveller will be very cautious how he speaks of any thing which he has not been in a situation to see himself, and what he has seen he will relate with that distrust in his own views, which every man of sense feels, particularly if they relate to objects entirely new to him. This would not, however, have answered the purpose of the Abbé Chappe; his object was to produce a voluminous work, and whenever the traveller cannot find any thing to say, he descends to the trade of a compiler. There would not have been much in this, had he drawn from sources unknown in France, but he found it easier to pillage from our writers and our translators than from original works.—Long passages are inserted, taken entirely from other books; he has even descended so far as to levy contributions from that poor miserable scribbler, Le Catt, the Surgeon of Rouen.

The second volume of the Abbé Chappe's work contains the description of Kamschatka, where we find, *first*, the manners and customs of the inhabitants; *secondly*, the geography of this and the adjacent countries; *thirdly*, the advan-

tages and disadvantages of this peninsula; *fourthly*, the reduction of Kamschatka by the Russians; the revolts which have happened there at different times, and the present state of the Russian forts in that country. This description is entirely from the work of the late Krascheninnikoff, Professor in the Academy of Sciences at St. Petersburgh, who died in 1755. In 1733 the Russian government sent a sort of caravan to Kamschatka to reconnoitre the country quite to the coast; to this caravan the Imperial Academy added several men of letters and science in various ways with several artists, and six young men capable of assisting their masters, and supplying their places in case of necessity. Among the number of the latter was M. Krascheninnikoff. He has incorporated in his work not only his own observations, but those of Professor Steller, who died in 1745, on his return from this expedition. The whole is curious and important; you will not be presented with the little *agreeablenesses* and *prettinesses* of the Abbé Chappe, but you will find them *in some measure* compensated by a fund of solid instruction and information. This work has been translated into English some years, and our rhapsodist Eidous has made a French translation from the English. But besides that M. Eidous is always guilty of blunders in all that he does, the English translation itself is mutilated in several places.—The French one, which forms the second volume

of M. Chappe's work, was made at St. Petersburgh from the original Russian, by a man whom the Abbé does not think proper to name.

Wishing our traveller a prosperous voyage to California, the romance of which he may write with greater safety than he has written that on Siberia, since there will be fewer people capable of detecting him, let me be permitted to observe, that the thing of all others which results the most clearly from the deepest researches,—from researches made with the highest degree of wisdom, of care, of ardour, of expense,—with the highest degree of every kind of effort that man is capable of bestowing upon them—the most important truth that can be collected I say from such researches is, that man is little capable of knowing the truth. Our happiest discoveries are only calculated to discourage us, and confirm us in the consciousness of our own weakness. In comparing our most enlarged geniuses with the immensity of nature, and the multitude of her secrets, our poor and important means and instruments with the machinery and masses opposed to us, there is scarcely a wise head that can avoid being ready to smile at the folly and vanity of our labours and enterprises. We have one particular defect which, more than any other, opposes our knowledge of the truth. Chance has no sooner put into our hands an instrument of any kind, however poor, than we apply it to every

thing, and confine all our means to this instrument. Since the invention of the barometer and thermometer, our physical observations upon the weight of the atmosphere, and upon the degree of heat and cold, are reduced to fixing the variation of the mercury in the little tubes of an instrument in itself extremely poor, and having very limited powers. Though we could know the precise point to which Reaumur's thermometer rose or descended such a day in all the capitals of Europe, we have, in the first place, learnt nothing; but who could assure us that the sensible effect of the cold or heat upon the liquor in the thermometer is the sole means of knowing the degree of these qualities in the air? Do we even know whether the thermometer of Paris, that of St. Petersburgh, and that of Naples preserve the same proportion and relation towards each other as to permit of establishing a correspondence between them, and drawing any conclusive arguments from their respective differences. I have heard a person of Naples conversant in physics say, that in heats when the thermometer was nearly at the same degree as at Paris, he had known the wax candles melt in the candlesticks, a thing which certainly was never known at Paris; here then we have an effect of the heat which we could not have suspected from observing the degree of the thermometer. Notwithstanding such a deficiency we make this instrument the criterion of all our

physical science in this branch, till chance shall lead us to the knowledge of some other, perhaps equally imperfect. In like manner in the medical science the variation of the pulse is made the grand medium for judging the state of a patient to a degree that it has rendered us inattentive to many other symptoms not less important, as the hue of the complexion and the alteration of the features, phenomena as decisive in acute maladies as the pulsation of the artery.

A Supplement to the Instructive Bibliography, or Catalogue Raisonné of the Library of the deceased M. Louis Jean Gaignat, by William Francis Debure, the younger, bookseller at Paris, with an Alphabetical Table of the Authors, is just published in two large volumes 8vo. This M. Debure is at present almost the only bookseller at Paris who is a man of any information. He has published *Instructive Bibliography* in seven volumes; if I mistake not, this work contains notices concerning several rare and curious books with important elucidations. The late M. Gaignat, strong as was the book mania which he had imbibed, could not but love such a man as Debure. He left him by his will a considerable legacy, and charged him with compiling and publishing the catalogue of his books; of this he has formed a Supplement to his own Bibliography. He sells the two volumes at twelve livres, which is thought

somewhat dear. One cannot resist making some philosophical reflections in casting an eye over this catalogue. There are in fact few good books which can long remain scarce, and I should not be very much surprised if some snarling philosopher were to call M. Gaignat's library the repository of nonsense. This celebrated amateur formed his collection at a very great expense; when he had picked up any old book in tolerably good condition, he had it magnificently bound in morocco, assigned it its place upon the shelf, and never opened it more. Owing to this singular mania, the purchasers at his sale will be sure of having their books in excellent condition. The sale of them will begin on the tenth of April, so at least the catalogue announces; the sale of the pictures has been carried on clandestinely, without its having been publicly advertised, so as to allow strangers the opportunity of making such purchases as they might wish. The heirs will be sufferers by this negligence. An offer was made on the part of the Empress of Russia to purchase the whole collection of pictures at two hundred and thirteen thousand livres, and probably twenty or thirty thousand more would have been added if required; but this offer the heirs were obliged to decline, because M. Gaignat's accounts relative to the public office which he held were not settled; they are, in consequence, considerable losers, since from the manner in which the pictures were

at length sold, they have produced no more than two hundred and eight thousand livres, and even from this must be deducted the expenses of the sale; an expense which would have been saved if they had been sold all together. A Virgin, by Murillos, was bought for the Empress of Russia at the price of seventeen thousand livres; M. Gaignat while he was alive had refused thirty thousand for it. Some of the finest pieces in the collection were bought by the Duke de Choiseul. There were two admirable pictures by Teniers; one was an unique, and was sold for eighteen thousand and odd livres. No picture went higher.

Towards the end of last month Prince Koslowski, Lieutenant of the Guards to the Empress of Russia, accompanied by another officer of the same corps, arrived at the Chateau of Ferney, and remitted to M. de Voltaire on the part of her Imperial Majesty a round ivory box mounted with gold turned by the Empress's own hand, containing her picture set round with most superb brilliants. It was accompanied by a rich fur pelisse to protect him from the winds of the Alps. She sent besides a French translation of the Code of Catherine the Second, and a manuscript journal of her inoculation, with a letter equally worthy of the genius that dictated it, and of him to whom it was addressed. This Imperial embassy has renovated the patriarch I hear at least ten years;

and since it seems written in the book of fate that he is to live out a century, we may fairly reckon upon his career being assured to us for thirty seven years longer. M. Huber, so well known for his talent in cutting out, has for some time past rather thrown his scissars aside and taken to painting, in which he is no less successful. He has proposed to her Imperial Majesty of Russia to paint the domestic life of M. de Voltaire in a series of pictures; the proposal was eagerly embraced by that august sovereign, and he is actually now occupied upon this interesting and curious work. He sent to the Empress, as a specimen, a picture of the reception of her embassy at Ferney. The patriarch is on his bed, appearing to have but a feeble breath of life remaining; the Russian Prince is announced bringing the precious tokens of Catherine's esteem; the patriarch starts up, receives them with the most profound tokens of respect and gratitude, and seems to find his youth renovated by them; this picture was sketched in a few days. The patriarch's life being extremely varied, M. Huber has an ample field opened before him; there is scarcely a moment in the day that does not present something interesting and picturesque. The hand that paints is a sufficient assurance of the likeness being every where faithfully preserved; whoever has seen M. Huber's performances in cutting out, knows how admirably he has always succeeded in taking M.

de Voltaire's likeness. For the rest, if this embassy has renovated the patriarch, it is not to make him lead an idle life.

M. Letourneur, whom I have not the honour of knowing, has just translated *Young's Night Thoughts* into French. They are in two volumes 8vo. handsomely printed, and are embellished with a plate of each *Night*. Young died in 1765, at the age of fourscore; he was at that time Chaplain to the Princess Dowager of Wales, and was the last of that constellation of celebrated men which England produced at the beginning of the century, and whose writings will ever remain among the brightest ornaments of their country. Young loved to paint every thing on the gloomy side, and it is the mixture of melancholy and elevation, of sadness and sensibility, which produces sometimes the most sublime strokes, though more frequently vague and indeterminate lights which appear and disappear almost at the same time, and only make a passing impression upon the mind. Young composed his *Nights* after having lost, within a very short time, a wife and two children, whom she had by a former husband, and whom he loved and cherished as if they had been his own. He was then near sixty years old, and devoted the rest of his life to lamentations for these objects of his tenderness, and to composing those elegies and complaints to which he

gave the name of *Night Thoughts*. Any one who can read these poems with pleasure, must have a very decided taste for the gloomy.

The translator has enriched his work with a great many notes, and has given, besides the principal poem, some other pieces by the same author, one of which is dedicated to M. de Voltaire.—Young had known the patriarch in England, and although no one could be of a more opposite turn to himself, he always paid him the greatest homage. I know not whether, as he boasts in his epistle, he made a convert of M. de Voltaire with regard to Milton; I do not believe the patriarch to be made of convertible materials upon any subject; but I have often observed, that without changing his opinion, he yields easily in conversation, because he fears *ennui* still more than the trouble of reforming his ideas.

April, 1769.

An important question to be decided is, to what point good taste can admit and authorise, the mixture of tragic and comic, the continual transition from the pathetic to the ridiculous, and back from the ridiculous to the pathetic, of which the *Deserter* of M. Sedaine furnishes a striking example. It is certain, that this author must have intended to make an experiment upon his audience, and see how far it was possible to compel them to laugh and cry alternately. He is a

rope-dancer who one moment terrifies me by the boldness of his leaps, and when he has succeeded in occasioning the utmost alarm, immediately begins to sport and trifle with me; then when he finds the impression of terror subside, recommences the feats that terrify; who, in short, plays with my feelings at his pleasure.

If I listen to the greater number of our theatrical critics, I should be told, that the *Deserter* is a sort of dramatic monster, and that this mixture of tragic and comic is barbarous; but I will not so hastily decide the question. In the first place, if we consult the great dramatic model, *Nature*, we shall see, that she, like M. Sedaine in the Deserter, continually mixes tragedy and comedy together, that she rarely presents us with a highly pathetic or terrible scene without placing something ridiculous by the side. Nothing is more natural; it is grand occurrences, grand interests, which call forth character, and it is the bringing out of character that brings out strokes of the ridiculous. Every man thoroughly sincere in the emotion that he experiences, who is carried so far away at the moment by the strong impression he receives, as to have no longer any command over himself, any power to dissemble what is passing within him, is always ridiculous to a certain degree, because he then resumes his natural animal instinct, and forgets the conventions of society, all those habits and customs by which

his natural propensities had been subdued; he is a made up animal who has forgot his lesson.

But will good taste permit the poet or the painter to give us in their utmost force all the comic strokes that might occur in a highly tragic scene?—Undoubtedly not. The art of the poet consists in selecting with judgment, and to do this, requires the nicest feeling, the utmost refinement of taste. It is possible, that an ape might by chance be placed in the midst of the most affecting scene, and might produce the most ludicrous effect imaginable by his tricks; but a poet who should permit himself to represent such a scene, must be destitute of invention, of taste, or of judgment. Let us, however, suppose, that in the procession of the *Fête Dieu*, a person belonging to the procession should be taken suddenly with a fit; that he should be assisted by those around, but should expire in a few minutes, and by this means the whole procession should be thrown into trouble and confusion;—that the master of the ceremonies should hasten, quite out of breath, from a distant part of the procession, to see what had put it into such disorder, and when he learnt the accident that had happened, should exclaim in a pettish and angry tone,—"A pretty trick indeed of this man to come and "die here only to put every thing into disorder "and spoil the finest procession that ever was "planned." This idea was imagined by my

friend Diderot, I give it in his own words; it is certainly in an excellent taste and I felicitate our philosopher on the originality of the thought; it remains only for the imaginations of others to render the picture as affecting as they please. Let the man who expires be the father of a family, whose very existence depends upon him; let his wife and children run to his assistance, and vainly endeavour to call him back to life;—what can be more affecting than such an incident? Or, let the victim be a young man in the flower of his age, and let a young woman who ardently loves him, to whom he is on the point of being united, running up and beholding this mournful spectacle, fall senseless into the arms of those around,—here again is another most affecting picture. If you are possessed of true genius, these pictures will be sketched in a manner that every one who reads them will be dissolved in tears, but before those tears are dried, the mourners will be forced to smile by seeing exhibited the stupid and absurd vanity of the master of the ceremonies, who can think of nothing in the disaster he witnesses but the unfortunate derangement of his procession.

It is then certain, that we may laugh and weep at the same time, and it only remains to consider how far the author may sport with our feelings in this way. I think that when the one effect injures the other, when the subordinate effect effaces or smothers the principal one, the poet

has missed his aim, and may be justly blamed. If it be true that the buffoon character in M. Sedaine's pieces produces more effect than the character of the *Deserter*, the author has certainly been guilty of a very great fault;—a fault so much the greater inasmuch as the buffoon character has not in reality any connection with the piece. To judge this question fairly, however, the composer must answer to the ideas of the poet. If the music given to the Deserter to sing be worthy of the affecting situation in which he is placed, we shall then, and then only, be fully enabled to judge whether the comic character of Montauciel, weakens, in fact, the tragic character of Alexis. For my own part, I shall not take upon me to decide this question, I do not know any body who seems to have so good a judgment in dramatic effect as M. Sedaine. I should not be surprised to see the character of Alexis, spite of the cold and dull music of Monsigni, after a certain number of representations, entirely supersede that of Montauciel, and reduce the latter to its proper level. Be this as it may, whenever I see M. Sedaine do a thing which I do not find immediately to my taste, I suspend my judgment for six months, before I venture to condemn it.

After this little theory upon the mixture of the comic with the tragic, I give our critics leave to reason on the matter as much as they please; but I warn them that I shall pay very little atten-

tion to their reasonings if they be not established upon observations founded in nature, and the very essence of things.

October, 1769.

France has been plunged into an unexpected mourning by the death of the *great* Poinsinet, commonly called the *little* Poinsinet. He went into Spain the beginning of this year to exercise, as he said, the office of intendant of the private pleasures of his Catholic Majesty. Others said, that he had carried with him a company of French players as a speculation, intending to be himself the manager. The fact is, that he went to bathe in the Guadalquivir, and to drown himself there. Probably the names of the Seine and the Loire were too common, and not sufficiently high-sounding, for him to think of ending his days in either of those streams; he was ambitious of reposing in a flood that bore a more noble and sonorous title. He took his last bath at an early age; I think he could not have seen more than thirty-five revolving suns. He rendered himself at once ridiculous and celebrated by a number of bad works, and by an odd assemblage of meanness and vanity, of insolence and cowardice. With an imagination a little more ardent, with more enthusiasm and courage, he would have been one of those formidable and unfortunate instruments of which fanaticism has sometimes successfully availed itself for the

achievement of great crimes. His head was easily mounted, his mind was easily distracted, and he would, through weakness, do very strong things without being aware of it, yielding to an impulse of which he was not himself sensible; but the least idea of danger immediately recalled him to himself. His ill-stars leading him early in life into low and bad company, he was the butt and aim of all the miserable jokes of a set of miserable would-be wits. P..... and Freron, the actors Preville and Bellecour, were at the head of this party; they used to get drunk at supper together two or three times in the week, and then their great amusement was to play upon the folly of M. Poinsinet, which they called *mystifying*. The trick served him, with regard to making him believe that he was appointed governor to the King of Prussia's children, has been already recorded. Another time he was made to believe that he had killed a man in a duel, and was pursued by the officers of justice. To elude their pursuit he had his hair cut off and put on a wig; but, tormented with remorse, he took refuge at the house of St. Lazarus, and wanted to be shut up there, although the superior represented to him that offenders were never received into that house except by an order from the police.

But the following was the worst trick played by these people upon their unfortunate butt. They

had a friend by name Patu, on whom P..... made a song, which he carried to him at his house at Passy, telling him in confidence that it was made by Poinsinet. Patu, irritated to the last degree, swore he would thrash Poinsinet well, the first time he came in his way; on which P..... made a feint of pleading Poinsinet's cause, and in pretending to defend him only irritated Patu more and more against him. This done he returned to Paris, where he, with another of his crew, expected Poinsinet to supper. Scarcely was the latter arrived when P..... told him that a horrible song against Patu was in circulation, and that Patu suspected him (Poinsinet) to be the author of it. A consultation was immediately held upon the best steps to be taken for making Poinsinet's innocence manifest, and P..... advised him to write another song upon Patu in a style of gaiety, but perfectly innocent, and carry it to him on the morrow, to disculpate himself from being the author of the other. Poinsinet thought the expedient admirable, and P..... succeeded in making him write line for line the very song which he had carried to Patu in the morning. Poinsinet went home fully persuaded that he was himself the author of the song, and that it was perfectly innocent. The next day away he went with it to Patu, and with the utmost simplicity and confidence said: "my friend, mankind are extremely "malignant; I had made a very innocent song

" upon you, and I am told that it has been horribly " travestied; I have therefore thought the best " thing I could do was to bring it to you such as " I really wrote it." Patu looked over the manuscript eagerly, but found it word for word the same as that which had excited his bile so much the day before. The issue of the visit may easily be guessed, poor Poinsinet had a sufficient dose of the thrashing with which he was menaced; but however degrading might be the manner in which he submitted to it, he could not be so much dishonoured as the contriver of the scheme.

After all these adventures M. Poinsinet went to make the tour of Italy. On his return to France, he stopped awhile at Ferney with M. de Voltaire, who accommodated himself as well as he could to such a guest; for men of superior minds, if they chuse it, can accommodate themselves to every thing. From this time M. Poinsinet separated himself entirely from the set who had so long made him their sport, and if by chance he ever met them, he would sometimes come out with a sally which won the laughers over to his side; notwithstanding this, he never could be any other than ridiculous.

We have several comic operas of his which, supported by Philidor's music, have met with some success; and his little piece, entitled *The Circle*, is still played on the French Theatre. For the Grand Opera he wrote *Ernelinda*, but it was so

bad, that not even Philidor's music could save it. Thus had he the honour of seeing his performances appear at three different theatres, which made him highly satisfied with himself. Authors have a happy blindness, a state of grace which they cannot too much cherish, and which prevents their seeing any unpleasant impressions made by their works. This was a happiness which M. Poinsinet possessed in a very eminent degree. He used to say: *When my Sorcerer appeared,* with as much complacency and self-satisfaction as M. de Voltaire could have said: *When my Henriade appeared.* When this same *Sorcerer* was first performed, the pit, at the conclusion of the performance, called out for the author to appear. Poinsinet did not wait for this to be twice asked; but he no sooner came on the stage, than a cry resounded from all parts, *No, no, the other, the other*; and they were obliged to seek for Philidor. This did not prevent M. Poinsinet's remaining on the stage, nor his inserting a remark in his preface to the *Sorcerer* when it was printed, *that this was the first time the public had not mingled any portion of bitter in the attentions shewn him.* For my part, as I have no rancour in my disposition, I forgive the God of the Guadalquivir the turn he has played us, and heartily recommend the soul of the great Poinsinet to his clemency; never shall I drown myself in that river for fear of meeting with it. He possessed in an eminent degree a talent, to

me of all others the most insupportable, that of excelling in the *ennuyeux* style. He sifted *ennui* over every thing he produced, with so artist-like a hand, yet in a manner so imperceptible, that his readers could not but be suffocated with it, though without ever being able to ascertain precisely from what part exhalations so mortal arose.

Every one still remembers with interest the adventure of M. de Valdahon of the musqueteers, and Mademoiselle de Monnier, daughter, if I am not mistaken, of a President of the Chamber of Accounts at Dole. The musqueteer officer, being surprized at night in the bed of this lady, was obliged to make his escape in a very miserable plight. A criminal suit was instituted against him, and the lady was shut up in a convent. The suit was urged by the lady's father against the young man as a seducer, but the old man lost his cause successively in the bailiwick of Dole, at the parliament of Besançon, and in the King's Council. The public and the tribunals saw nothing but two lovers, guilty beyond a doubt in having given way to their transports, but whose weakness ought not to be considered as a matter absolutely unpardonable. The constancy of M. de Valdahon in repeatedly offering his hand to the daughter of his persecutor, whose prosecution aimed at nothing less than bringing him to the scaffold, affected every heart not impenetrable to the feelings

of sensibility; M. de Monnier alone remained inflexible. After seven years of hatred and persecution, Mademoiselle de Monnier at length coming of age and being mistress of herself, the first step taken by her lover was to send her the banns of marriage signed with his own hand, and a letter conjuring her to hasten as much as possible an union which he so much desired. M. de Monnier not only refused the consent requested on such occasions as a matter of respect, but renewing the accusations against the young man, already rejected by all the tribunals, he is making all possible opposition to the celebration of the marriage. It is to be believed that he will be foiled in his present machinations, as in all his former ones, and that this unfortunate young couple, punished for their weakness by seven years of suffering and persecution, will at length find their reward in their reciprocal constancy and tenderness.

M. Loiseau de Mauléon, formerly a celebrated Advocate, now Counsellor of the Sovereign Court at Nancy, defended seven years ago the cause of M. de Valdahon, and the memorials written by him on that occasion will be found in the collection of his pleadings. Although he is no longer at the bar, he has kindly taken up the pen in behalf of Mademoiselle de Monnier and answered a new memorial which her father has published against her and her lover. This answer has produced a strong sensation in the public mind, and

does great honour to M. Loiseau de Mauléon; but since I must always say what I think, I cannot forbear owning that it does not thoroughly satisfy me. We find undoubtedly at intervals, particularly towards the end, some passages truly pathetic, but I must think that when we are to suppose a daughter, unfortunate, persecuted, yet firm though respectful, addressing an inflexible, implacable father, a very different kind of language should be adopted. The language appears to me essentially cold, and how little talent soever Mademoiselle de Monnier may be supposed to have, who possibly after all may have a great deal, if it be true that notwithstanding all her father's atrocities and persecutions she feels the sentiments towards him which she is made to express, she would have clothed them in a very different kind of language; —in language more simple indeed, but for that very reason much more affecting and impressive. In fact the juridical defence ought to have been separated from the daughter's address to her parent. The Advocate should have spoke first on the part of his client, not in her person, and she might afterwards have become the speaker, saying: "Such are my rights, now listen, my father, to the "language of sentiment and of filial respect."

In the different conversations with the King of Prussia, with which I was so fortunate as to be honoured in September last, his Majesty condes-

cended to talk to me of his interview with the Emperor Joseph the Second. He spoke of this prince in warm terms of eulogium, and assured me among other things that his reign would be that of toleration. I could not forbear saying that I wished M. de Voltaire could be informed of the dawn of so fine a day, that his almost extinguished eyes might be delighted with so consolatory a spectacle. His Majesty not only permitted me to impart the good news to the patriarch, but authorized me to cite him as the guarantee of a fine reign. I have acquitted myself of this duty, and M. de Voltaire has taken the opportunity of writing to the King of Prussia. I however beg to renounce formally the title of Bohemian, which he has been graciously pleased to bestow upon me in this letter; I never in my life, I can assure him, was in Bohemia.

November, 1769.

As the domestic arrangements in the chateau of Ferney at present interest, more or less, all the courts of Europe, it is necessary here to record, that the widow Denis, niece to the lord patriarch, has resumed the route to Ferney, there to be reinstated in her government. The impertinent crew that furnish articles for the public papers, have announced that the uncle is *reconciled* to his niece; now they never had quarrelled. The uncle used to write to the niece twice in the week, and a-

lowed her twenty thousand livres a year in addition to her own fortune. But where shall we find the great empire that does not sometimes experience revolutions? What season is not sometimes interrupted by tempests? The patriarch, weary of so much tumult in his menagerie, resolved one day to clear his house entirely, so sent away the whole tribe of nieces, Corneilles, Dupuys, Chabanons, La Harpes, the whole aviary, in short, of noisy, troublesome flutterers; not one, however, were left unprovided for. We here were foolish enough to pity our hero in his solitude, but never was he less an object of pity. Left to himself, with nothing to interrupt his passion for his pen and his books, never was he less alone, never was he more happy. He had his house cleaned from the garret to the cellar, and it was kept as neat and nice as any house in the whole republic of Holland. But at length he has repented, and yielded to the prayers of the niece with as much facility as he before cleared his house. Time will shew us whether the same succession as before of plays, balls, suppers, and festivities of all kinds, is to succeed to the austerity of a seclusion of eighteen months.

Another chapter from the chronicle of Ferney relates, that while Madame Denis was on the road to Paris in the spring of last year, he who has the charge of the corporeal nourishment of the lord patriarch, in vulgar language his cook,

who had been at Paris on private business of his own, was on his return homewards. This same cook honoured me with a visit before his departure, to know whether I had any commands to charge him with for his master, when he found with me M. Bigex, amusing himself with copying over some papers for the service of certain princes. It is necessary that you should know who this M. Bigex is, since he will be soon one of the most celebrated men in Europe. He was born in a village of Savoy, and had undoubtedly some opportunity of learning Latin in his youth, since he understands it well. His good taste and good judgment led him to reading the works of M. de Voltaire, and our best writers, while his necessities constrained him to go out to service. It was in this situation that I became acquainted with him, when I made him my principal copyist, and indeed my *factotum*. Before he lived with me he had taken a journey into his own country, and returning home stopped at Ferney to pay his homage to the patriarch, who entertained him, as he entertains every body, with the utmost hospitality. The patriarch learning from his cook, that M. Bigex was at work for me, and wanting a reinforcement in the secretarial department, asked me to spare him this able workman. This was indeed cutting off my right hand, but I consented with joy to make the fortune of M. Bigex, and since that time he works under the orders of a master

who will, he may depend upon it, give him a place among his testamentary remembrances with the other clerks of his philosophical office. M. Bigex has already rendered his name illustrious since his abode at the see of Ferney; many letters written by him to M. de Voltaire have been printed and he has served as a witness to his patron on several juridical occasions. The worst part of the story is, that a literary dispute has arisen between him and the ex-Jesuit Father Antonius Adam. Anthony Bigex solemnly accused the reverend father of having stolen some fruit by night from a garden; for which the latter, who, though he might possibly digest such kind of reflections from the master of Ferney, has no notion of the clerk's taking the same liberties, has summoned the said Anthony Bigex to answer his assertions before a court of justice. This suit, which is instituted in the bailiwick of Gex, is to be pleaded and judged in form after Saint Martin. In the mean time, M. Anthony Bigex, without injury to his civil rights, has brought forwards his literary reasonings against Father Antonius Adam in a letter of eight pages entitled, *A New Provincial*, to which he has prefixed as a motto, *Quo semel est imbuta recens servabit odorem testa diù.* This provincial displays great erudition, with a most agreeable vein of pleasantry. The anagram, *Ad omnia natus*, which the philosopher Anthony Bigex finds in the name of *Antonius Adam*, is most happily applied to a ci-devant Jesuit. What can

this stupid animal of a Father Adam mean? M. de Voltaire very truly told us, that he was not a first rate genius; but he ought not to have forgotten what befel the first man for meddling too freely with apples; one should have thought that this was enough to have disgusted every subsequent Adam with apples so entirely that he would have shrunk from the mention of them, even though he had seen his neighbours stealing them every night. It is said that the lord patriarch amuses himself very much with this suit, and intends to leave justice to its free course; what part the niece Denis will take in it is as yet unknown. She does not much love the philosopher Anthony Bigex, but still less does she love the Jesuit Antonius Adam.

More news from Ferney. The patriarch has just taken upon himself the office of editor of *The Recollections of the Marchioness de Caylus.* This he has enriched with many notes and has given at the head of it a short preface; in the latter, La Beaumelle is handled no less roughly than he is in the *Defence of Louis the Fourteenth.* These Recollections form one small volume; the work is not finished, it is properly speaking only a fragment, and as it has been much handed about in manuscript, many persons are already well acquainted with it, and speak highly of it. The title of *Recollections* sounds very pretty, but it must be acknowledged that *The Recollections of*

Madame de Caylus, besides that they scarcely give us any new information, are not written with that charm, that facility, that grace, which we had a right to expect from a work of this kind, written by a lady of the Court. They must ever remain very far from being able to bear a comparison with the *Memoirs of Madame de Staël*, or with the charming chit-chat of Madame de Sévigné. Their title allows a certain degree of negligence, even renders it necessary, but that negligence ought not, as is nearly the case here, to degenerate into a total want of order. Madame de Caylus jumps continually in such a manner from one recollection to another, without the least attention to chronology, without ever indicating the time of which she speaks, that if the details of the reign of Louis the Fourteenth were less known, we should have the utmost difficulty to collect any clear ideas respecting them from her *Recollections*. Take the work on the whole, it cannot be said that there is any thing very interesting in it; nay what is worse, it will become every day less and less interesting. In proportion as posterity become farther and farther removed from this age, the interest of little facts, of little anecdotes, of little histories will be weakened, till at last it is entirely lost.

Madame de Caylus was mother to that Comte de Caylus whose death I mentioned some few years ago, and who passed his life in cultivating and encouraging literature and the arts after his own

fashion; she was niece to Madame de Maintenon and was brought up by her. Established at Court, and enjoying a considerable share of her aunt's confidence, she was in a situation to see and know a variety of things. Madame de Maintenon is one for whom I have ever had a most decided aversion, and Madame de Caylus's *Recollections*, have not altered my opinion with regard to her. We see in all her actions, the petty management, the sentiments, the manners of a very clever waiting-woman, who by dint of much suppleness, of many artifices, and a thousand little devout intrigues, found means to transform the court into something more resembling my lady's maid's dressing-room, than the abode of royalty. Every thing about it during her reign had an air so ordinary, so melancholy, so tradesman-like, that it is impossible to recur to such a period without feeling the extremest disgust. Her defenders say, that the height to which she raised herself is alone sufficient to prove her superior merit; but that I deny. It is true that to become Queen of France, from having been only the widow of Scarron, is to have overleaped as vast a boundary as can be well conceived, but nothing more was necessary for this than to associate to the petty artifices of ambition the petty practices of devotion. In general it is not very difficult for little minds to attain splendid situations; it is much more difficult for great minds to attain the place to which their merit fully entitles

them. In the first place, elevation of sentiments is almost always an insurmountable obstacle to fortune; it is an effectual barrier against a thousand easy and certain means of advancement; talents are even adverse to advancement, unless they be accompanied with vast intrepidity of soul, with a sort of courage that men of truly honest and upright hearts do not wish to possess. For if, on the one hand, they multiply our means of attaining the proposed end, they, on the other, place before our eyes in but too forcible a point of view, the obstacles we have to surmount; this inconvenience is great, and the multiplication of our means is not always an advantage. I am persuaded that in carefully examining the conduct of those who have attained to any extraordinary fortune, we shall be tempted to believe there is nothing so sure of succeeding as not to be over brilliant, as to be entirely wrapped up in oneself, and endowed with a perseverance which, spite of all the rebuffs it may meet with, never relaxes in the pursuit of its object. It is incredible what may be done by dint of importunity alone, and where shall we find the man of real talents who knows how to be importunate enough? He is too soon overcome with the disgust inspired by all matters which have interest only for their object, with the *ennui* of perpetual solicitation; he is too much alive to all the little movements visible on the countenance of the person solicited, and he

gives up the pursuit. The fool sees none of these things, feels none of these things; he pursues his object with unremitted ardour, and at length attains it.

Marshal Belle-Isle used to say that he found it essential never to lose sight for a moment of any of his projects, and by following this maxim he at length, at the age of seventy, arrived at the office of Secretary at War; it was somewhat late in life indeed, but however he did succeed. Madame de Maintenon undoubtedly followed the same maxim; and notwithstanding that Madame de Caylus gives us the greater part of her ambitious intrigues, as acts of pure virtue, we see clearly that from the moment she was appointed governess to Louis the XIVth's natural children, she conceived the idea, which she pursued with unremitting zeal, of supplanting Madame de Montespan and succeeding to her place. Read what she said to Louis at the review of the musqueteers, about the time when the good man first began to be visited by fears of the devil, and then admire, if you can, the heroic courage and goodness of soul of Madame de Maintenon. For my part, I must admire the beauty of our Catholic morality, and the happiness of Catholic people, whose sovereigns never have to reproach themselves with any thing worse than the sweet sin of yielding too much to love; all the remorse by which their timorous consciences are assailed is commonly reduced to this one point

Well, be it so!—little does it concern the people that their prince should have a fancy for a pretty woman, if they are not plundered and oppressed, and he be as amiable upon the throne as at the feet of his mistress. I cannot think that the good Henry the IVth was absolutely unpardonable, if after having been labouring all day to promote the happiness of his people, he went in the evening to give an account of his toils to the fair Gabrielle. I am far from despising domestic virtues in a prince; I should rejoice, as much as any man, to see him a good husband, a good father, a sincere and faithful friend; but I would have the virtues of the man embellish the great qualities of the hero, —I would deprecate earnestly any private virtues that may interfere with the public good. It was much better for France that Louis the XIVth should live on terms somewhat open to scandal with Madame de Montespan, and retain at the head of affairs that Colbert who rendered France great and prosperous, who made commerce and the arts flourish, than that he should become the legal wedded husband of Scarron's widow, while a mortal blow was given to the country by the revocation of the edict of Nantes. What can be said of a king who could suffer himself to be so led by a wife and a confessor, that he was much more occupied with quarrels about Jansenism, than with the defeats of his armies,—who could remove the great

Catinat from his command because he did not go regularly to mass?

Madame de Caylus gives us a picture of Louis the Fourteenth with no less frankness and truth than she has painted that of her aunt. The King forbade Madame de Montespan to speak to him in the evening after she had quitted Madame de Maintenon; conscious that the latter talked much better than himself, he was afraid that his merit should decline in the eyes of his mistress. This Madame de Caylus gives as an instance of his delicacy, and in such kind of delicacies the King abounded. She tries also to persuade us, that he did not wish to make great people of his natural children, to raise them to the rank of Princes. She says, that he did not approve their marrying Princes of the Blood, and this was done in opposition to his wishes. Aye, truly!—was Louis the Fourteenth of a disposition to suffer contradiction, especially in what concerned him personally? It would certainly have been better to have made these children gentlemen of rank only, without thinking of making them Princes, since they could never be assimilated with the Princes of the Blood; nor can he ever be pardoned for having incorporated them with almost every branch of the royal family.

The Abbé Delille is a man of great, of very

great talents; he is, they say, very young, which is so much the better. He has published a translation of the Georgics of Virgil in French verse, enriched with notes, and preceded by a preliminary discourse. He has printed the Latin text with the translation, but notwithstanding this, it would take up a great deal of time and attention to make a vigorous comparison between the text and the translation, more than I can spare at this moment. I have, however, seen enough to have assured myself, that the pains taken by the Abbé have been prodigious, and that there is nothing of the kind in the French language at all to be compared to it. If I were not afraid of scandalising the devotees to the antients, I should say, that I suspect the translator to be always equal to his original; I have at least found him so in the few passages where I have been able to make the comparison; and this authorizes me to form a favourable augury for the rest. I know that fastidious critics may very possibly say, that the Abbé Delille's work is less a translation than a paraphrase; but this is to attack the very nature of the undertaking; none but the most cold and feeble of versifiers would attempt to translate the poetry of one language into the poetry of another any thing like literally. In the mean time, while we are waiting for the public voice upon this new translation of the Georgics, I counsel the

French Academy to reserve the next vacant seat among their body for the translator. It is said, that M. Delille is now employed on a translation of the Eneid, four books of which are already completed *. It must be said, that he begun with the most difficult work; the translation of the Georgics requires a genius of a very different cast from that of the Eneid. I am persuaded, that whoever reads the Georgics will be impatient for the farther productions of M. Delille's pen.

* The Abbé Delille's translation of the Eneid was not published till the year 1803 or 1804.

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